

Commentary

May 2005

The Bush Doctrine's Next Test

Victor Davis Hanson

Jews, Arabs, and French Diplomacy

A Special Report

David Pryce-Jones

Investing in Conservative Ideas

James Piereson

What Native Peoples Deserve

Roger Sandall

My Uncle Simon

Hillel Halkin

Love at the Multiplex

Algis Valiunas

Master of the Art Song

Terry Teachout

"The War Against World War IV"

Angelo M. Codevilla, Mark Helprin, Charles R. Kesler, Edward N. Luttwak & others,
with a rejoinder by Norman Podhoretz

Books in Review

Dan Seligman • Sam Munson • Roger Kaplan

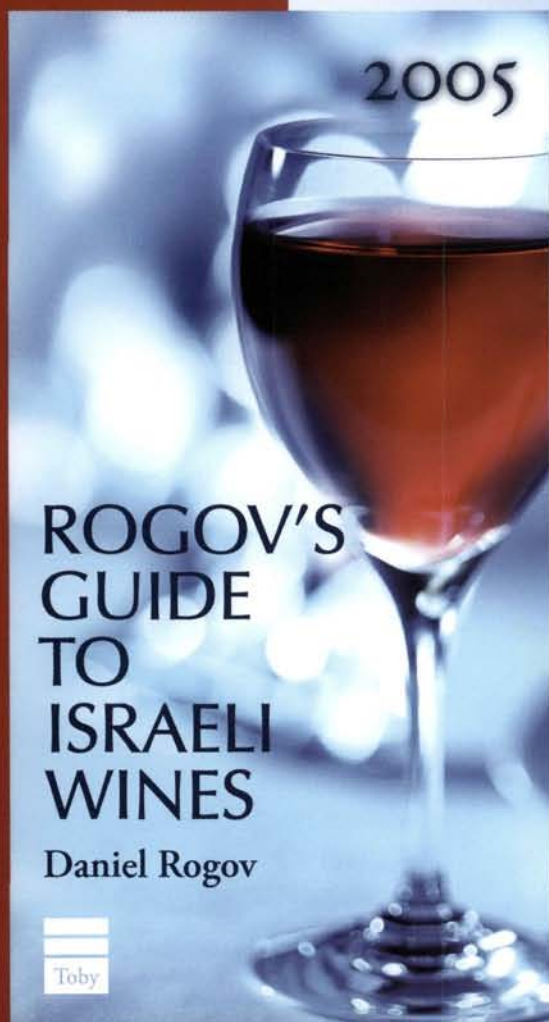
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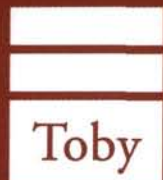
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Commentary

Vol. 119 • May 2005 • No. 5

ARTICLES

21

The Bush Doctrine's Next Test *Victor Davis Hanson*

Can we take a principled stand for democracy when three of our powerful "friends" in the Muslim world are dictatorships?

27

Jews, Arabs, and French Diplomacy: A Special Report *David Pryce-Jones*

Since the 19th century, *raison d'état* has been powerfully reinforced at the top by a culture of anti-Semitism.

46

Investing in Conservative Ideas *James Piereson*

Philanthropists have played a key role in the advance of today's governing philosophy, but tomorrow's remains up for grabs.

54

What Native Peoples Deserve *Roger Sandall*

Should the beleaguered tribes of the Amazon rain forest be preserved unchanged forever?

60

My Uncle Simon *Hillel Halkin*

In the life of a Zionist poet and critic, the great struggle for a marriage of Judaism and humanism is won, and lost.

OBSERVATIONS

68

Love at the Multiplex *Algis Valiunas*

Three recent movies mine the depths of our intimate lives, to rather different effect.

MUSIC

72

Master of the Art Song *Terry Teachout*

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is not to everyone's taste, but what he did no one else has done better.

LETTERS

3

"The War Against World War IV"; Bible translation; the Jewish vote; Muslim apostasy; etc.

BOOKS

77 *Winning the Future* by Newt Gingrich *Dan Seligman*

80 *Saturday* by Ian McEwan; *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer *Sam Munson*

85 *Chronicles* by Bob Dylan *Roger Kaplan*

88 *Anti-Americanism*, edited by Andrew Ross and Kristin Ross;
Understanding Anti-Americanism, edited by Paul Hollander *Arch Puddington*

90 *Buried by the Times* by Laurel Leff *Daniel Johnson*

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E. Robert Goodkind,
President

Letters from Readers

World War IV

TO THE EDITOR:

It is not altogether pleasant to appear in my friend Norman Podhoretz's latest rogues' gallery ["The War Against World War IV," February]. It is especially strange to find myself criticized, alongside Mark Helprin and Angelo M. Codevilla, for urging that the war against terrorism be prosecuted more vigorously. This makes us, in Mr. Podhoretz's words, "superhawks" whose various prescriptions for "ruthlessness" in war are so extreme as to be "utopian." These are, I would note, precisely the sort of criticisms usually directed at Mr. Podhoretz himself.

At any rate, immediately after 9/11 I commissioned for the *Claremont Review of Books* a series of "Victory Watch" essays by Codevilla because I was concerned that without a clear definition—and corresponding pursuit—of victory, the war effort would drift. It would

degenerate into the pursuit of "shadowy" terrorist networks while leaving intact the regimes that inspired and sustained them. So far, the Bush administration has done better than I had feared, but not as well as I had hoped.

We missed our chance, at least our best chance, to destroy the regime in Iraq, and as a result the war goes on. The Baathists have been displaced and to some extent disgraced, which is a great achievement; but they and their terrorist allies have not been defeated. For reasons that Helprin and Codevilla have well explained, the choices now before us are harder than they need have been. Increasingly, it looks as if, rather than winning the war ourselves, we intend to hand it over to the Iraqis (or at least to the Shiites and Kurds) to win, lose, or draw.

Is it "utopian" to think that the U.S. might have done—might still do—better? And which is *more*

utopian: to advise a more warlike prosecution of the war on terror, or, as Mr. Podhoretz advocates, "to push all the states in the greater Middle East—every last one of them—toward democracy"?

The Iraqis who voted in the recent election were indeed brave, but it should be remembered that their bravery manifested itself during a security crackdown that amounted almost to martial law. Perhaps it is "ruthless" to think that martial law can be necessary and useful, especially in a war zone, but who doubts that a little more order from the beginning of the American occupation would have been good for freedom in Iraq?

On the relation between democratization and the war, I think the Bush Doctrine is potentially in conflict with itself—certainly Mr. Podhoretz's imagery is. He urges the U.S. to "sow the seeds" of democratization and "help to water them as they flower and

grow." At the same time, he wants America to "drain the swamps" of despotism that are "the breeding-grounds of terrorism" in the Middle East. But you cannot sow (and water!) seeds in an existing swamp, especially one crawling with alligators. Presumably Mr. Podhoretz wants the U.S. first to get rid of the tyrants and terrorists, and only then to get on with the Johnny Appleseed part.

But the attractions of gardening may prove more compelling than the rigors of swamp-clearing, even to the good men of the Bush administration. There is growing evidence that this is already happening in Iraq, and perhaps also with regard to American policy toward Iran. To put the dilemma in Mr. Podhoretz's terms, why worry about fighting World War IV if everything in the Middle East will soon be coming up roses?

President Bush is correct to defend democracy's moral, political, religious, and eco-

conomic superiority to tyranny and terror. But between the best and the worst are many types of government that can be useful in an imperfect world. Even Woodrow Wilson distinguished, implicitly, between making the world safe for democracy and making the world democratic. The latter effort, especially if pursued under the illusion that history must be on our side, will distract from and eventually imperil the former.

CHARLES R. KESLER
Claremont Review of Books
Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR:

According to Norman Podhoretz, I do not imagine that a strategy like President Bush's, "based on so many false premises and so much timidity and weakness, ever can or ever will succeed." I am guilty as charged. Mr. Podhoretz supports the Bush Doctrine, but he does not explain its premises, its ends, or the means by which he believes it will succeed. He blames the shortcomings of the war on the constraints imposed on our elected leaders by the character of the American people or by the nature of democracies. But the American people have given Bush every tool he has asked for. Is Mr. Podhoretz suggesting that democracy is a handicap in waging war? If that were the case, it would be a suicide pact.

Mr. Podhoretz alleges that I consider "ruthlessness" to be "the only way to wage war." But I argued that any and all weapons of war—from diplomacy to economic subversion to military action—are meaningful to the extent that they lead to victory. Violence or nonviolence should

not be chosen for its own sake; each war requires its own particular combination of means. To choose a set of ends without also choosing the means to achieve them is to combine what Theodore Roosevelt called "the unbridled tongue" with "the unready hand." Mr. Podhoretz agrees that the means I advocate would suppress terrorism. I wish he would explain how he thinks the Bush policies are doing that.

I have argued that we have the indefeasible need and right to demand that regimes end the incitement, eliminate the chiefs, stop the financing, and abandon the causes behind terror. If they do not do these things—as in fact many have not—we ought to use our military capacity to undo *them*. If we do not use this power, we deserve our troubles. But we have neither the need, nor the power, nor the right, to change foreign societies. Trying to and failing—or just talking about it and fumbling—discredits our power and our ideals, and multiplies our enemies.

A regime consists of more than just a government; it includes the larger group of collaborators, constituents, educators, enforcers, beneficiaries, and money men. Because the Bush team confuses regimes with governments, we only removed the topmost layer of Iraq's Baathist ruling class. The Bush team has refilled top posts, especially in the military and intelligence apparatuses, with Baathist retreads. To the dismay of the Shiites and the Kurds, we have protected the regime's remnants from the majority of Iraqis, even as those remnants were trying to delegitimize Iraq's elec-

tions with guns and bombs. Eradicating regimes requires exposing their members and their friends to the tender mercies of their local enemies.

Though military power can destroy regimes, it cannot build new ones. Much less can it change cultures. For Mr. Podhoretz (citing President Bush), the war should be about replacing current regimes with "elected governments that would work to fulfill the hopes of 'the peoples of the Islamic nations [who] want and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities as peoples of every nation.'" Bush "refuse[s] to accept" that those in the region who want to live in what we call freedom and opportunity are a tiny minority. But what Bush refuses to accept is reality itself. Men are created equal. But their habits and yearnings are not, and the culture of the majority of people in the Middle East is alien to freedom. Denying this reality is evidence not of superior morality but of inferior integrity. The notion of liberating peoples from their own cultural identities is nuts. President Bush may not know that corruption, self-dealing, conspiracy, and ethnic hate are habits endemic to the region, but Mr. Podhoretz surely knows it.

For Mr. Podhoretz, those in favor of World War IV are right *ipso facto*, while all the others are defeatists—even those like myself who, through the study of what victory requires, try piercing the fog of war. I wish Bush every success. Perhaps Mr. Podhoretz can show me why I should expect it.

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

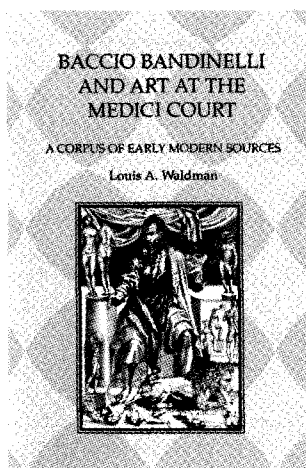
TO THE EDITOR:

I'm not grateful to Norman Podhoretz for attacking me, although I still like him and there's no question that he's adorable.

Just to set the record straight, however, I do not advocate "all-out war—total mobilization at home, total ruthlessness on the battlefield." What does that mean, anyway? Nuclear weapons? Executing prisoners? Killing non-combatants? All-out war would have turned Baghdad into molten glass. Usually, it is the careless, "it-doesn't-matter-what-your-position-actually-is," loony Left that attributes such things to me.

As for ruthlessness, in my own military service I never violated, nor would I have violated, the laws of war, nor have I ever advocated their violation. Going armed among civilians, I was obliged to think about such things, and had decided that I would sacrifice my own life rather than kill an innocent. It was not an easy decision, and to this day I cannot be sure that I would have kept to it. But to cast me as a blood-thirsty, unthinking "superhawk" is inaccurate, especially when my public and private advice has been aimed at minimizing casualties among American soldiers and non-combatants (and, had it been followed, would have done so). I plead guilty to advocating the use of every sanctioned resource to kill an enemy who is actively seeking our destruction, but that does not make me a "superhawk" any more than it makes me a penguin.

Nor have I ever recommended "total mobilization." In fact, in the piece from the *Claremont Review of Books* that Mr. Podhoretz



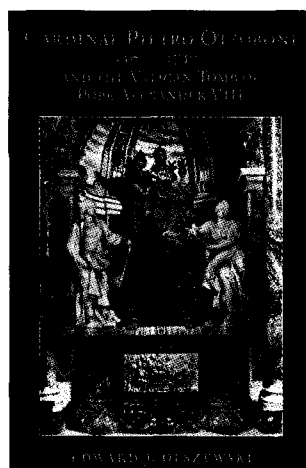
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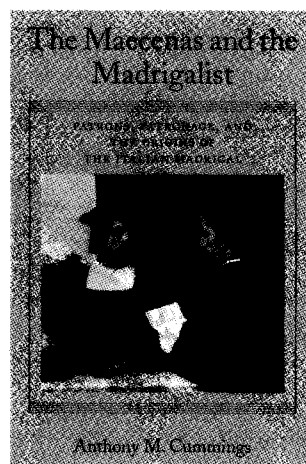
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cites, I said, specifically, of total mobilization,

I am not advocating any such thing. As pressing as our needs may be, we are not engaged in a war against a major power, and the intensity of engagement in World War II is far and above what is necessary. I point it out to show what we can do, and what actually we have done, if we concert our will.

What I have advised is that we raise defense spending from the Bush administration's average of 3.3 percent of GNP from 2001 to 2003 (excluding "emergency" supplements) to at least the 5.7 percent the United States managed on average during the *peacetime* years of the period 1940-2000, something that would hardly break us and that is not even comparable to full mobilization, which during World War II meant spending as much as 38.5 percent of GNP (in 1945). You cannot fight a hawk's war, whatever its object, with a dove's budget, unless you want to get into the kind of trouble we are in now. Why would someone who posits that we are fighting something as grave as World War IV look so askance at total mobilization anyway—or is it "World War IV, Fat-Free"?

Which is not to say that I do not disagree with Mr. Podhoretz. I do. Implicit in my position, which I have made clear repeatedly on the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* and in *National Review*, is the charge that the President has made a mess of the war—preparing insufficiently; refusing the opportunity after September 11 to mobilize the country; sending troops into battle

late and inadequately supported; squandering the military power that he has consistently failed properly to augment; seizing on aims, such as reforming the Islamic world, that are both impossible and impertinent; leaving the United States open on almost every flank; and failing to inspire, argue, judge, and lead as a war President, much less a World War IV President, should.

MARK HELPRIN
Charlottesville, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

In his forthright article, my friend Norman Podhoretz finds that I "misperestimated" George W. Bush when I hazarded the prediction that, like other second-term Presidents, he would not persist with the more controversial foreign-policy ventures of his first term. My reasoning was that democracies tend to revert to the moderate mean instead of going off the rails.

Mr. Podhoretz, for his part, views the moderate policies that I favor as weak compromises, and he suggests that I fail to "recognize the exceptionally strong leader America has found in this President, or to take the measure of his boldness, his determination, and his stamina." On the basis of his own assessment of the President's character, he makes the opposite prediction of a steady course ahead.

Mr. Podhoretz may turn out to be right, but in that case I doubt he will rejoice in the outcome. I say this because in specific, material ways the policies of George W. Bush are not sustainable. Extremists believe that "boldness" and "determination" can overcome all constraints—in-

deed, that was the central Mussolinian theme—but democratic politicians cannot long ignore the numbers.

The administration has grossly overused the ground components of the U.S. armed forces, with severe consequences that cannot be willed away. From the start, the U.S. occupation of Iraq suffered from a severe manpower deficit. Our inability to police Iraq in such a way as to achieve a minimum standard of law and order—the chief responsibility of any occupying power—allowed looting and civil unrest to set back the reconstruction effort over a year before it was halted altogether by the pervasive insecurity that continues still.

The few Iraqis not pre-conditioned by religious mandate to hate America (the famously moderate Ayatollah Sistani refuses to shake hands with infidels and has refused to meet any "Christian," i.e., American, official), and even those who had participated in our occupation regime, became hostile to Americans. For once, they had good reason: many had family members who were robbed, injured, raped, or killed by bandits during the mayhem. The prestige of the United States has been damaged, and it is no consolation that tighter policing would have evoked accusations of an oppressive occupation.

At no point during the occupation, including the recent election build-up, did the total number of U.S. military personnel in Iraq exceed 150,000 or so, which translates into a "rifle strength" total of at most 75,000 that could guard, patrol, cordon-and-search, raid, counter-strike, or otherwise contain

the Baathist revanchists, local and imported jihadists, and mindless resisters. That number is only about twice the manpower level of the New York City police department. A rifle strength of at least 200,000 (for a total of at least 400,000 personnel) would have been minimally adequate, but even the present grossly inadequate troop level exceeds the sustainable capacity of our active and reserve military forces when one considers their many deployments around the globe.

Inflexible arithmetic cannot be willed away. Instead it has been circumvented by injurious expedients. Uninterrupted one-year tours are far too long for healthy young soldiers to be deprived of rest and recreation and to be away from their families. Formations have been rotated back to Iraq without a proper interval for visits at home or for tactical regeneration by way of training. National Guard and Army Reserve units, which are essential to the military infrastructure at home but were never before deemed fit for deployment overseas, have been sent to the combat zone in Iraq.

Again, boldness and determination cannot mitigate the consequences: enlistments and re-enlistments are down sharply (except in the Marine Corps reserve) even though pay, benefits, and bonuses have increased. Promising young career officers are leaving the service because they do not want to return to Iraq for another year—something that never happened in the Vietnam war.

While I defer to Mr. Podhoretz's superior knowledge of our President, it is my prediction nonetheless

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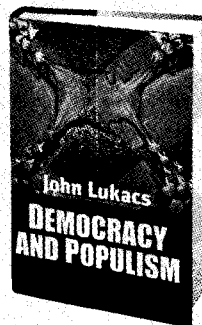


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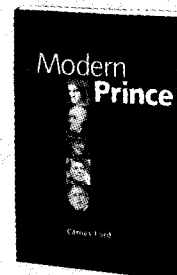
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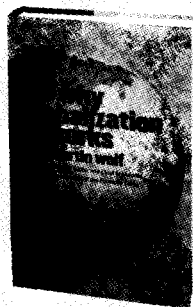
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that shortages of money and of men will impose moderation on the second Bush administration in the form of disengagement from Iraq and non-engagement (at least by ground troops) elsewhere. It is fortunate, therefore, that the non-transport part of the Air Force is underemployed instead of overtaxed, allowing the President to revert to the mean by bombing the outrageously immoderate, as his more moderate predecessors were wont to do.

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK
*Center for Strategic and
International Studies
Washington, D.C.*

TO THE EDITOR:

Citing my essay, "A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy," Norman Podhoretz charges me with two sins: that I "implicitly" place "the things America has done under George W. Bush on a par with the 'iniquities' of the Soviet Union under Stalin, from 'the horrors of collectivization, the show trials, the devouring of the children of the Revolution in purges and assassinations' and up through 'the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939'"; and that I and like-minded critics are "rooting for an American defeat" in the war on terror. This grossly misrepresents what I wrote, and I am happy to repudiate both of the positions that Mr. Podhoretz imputes to me.

By using the word "implicitly," Mr. Podhoretz attributes the Stalinist comparison to me even though I did not make it myself. In enumerating Soviet iniquities, I was describing how different enthusiasts of the Soviet experiment reached the moment when they felt the psychological need to

repudiate the object of their beliefs. It was the character of these turning points, not some absurd comparison between Bush and the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact, that I found interesting and instructive in considering the reaction of several writers (myself included) to the Bush revolution in American foreign policy.

I do think there is a legitimate parallel to be drawn between the Bush Doctrine and Trotskyism and other ideologies that support overturning illegitimate regimes through force, but the main emphasis in my writings, and especially in the essay Mr. Podhoretz cites, has been on the striking affinities between the Bush revolution and the French Revolution. The votaries of both had a universal creed, a declared willingness to liberate foreign peoples from tyranny, a strategic doctrine of preventive war, and armed forces (yesterday's *levée en masse*, today's "revolution in military affairs") that represented a new order of military power. This complex of ideas and conditions does not signify totalitarianism, but it still constitutes a serious political malady.

Mr. Podhoretz writes that critics of the Bush Doctrine who insist that it will end in tears are "rooting for defeat." He singles me out with mock admiration for candidly confessing to this sordid desire when in fact I did no such thing, and he imputes the same desire to many fellow critics, though without offering evidence. There is no older argument in politics than that such-and-such a course of action will end in trouble or disaster. A political opposition must be permitted to spec-

ulate on what will or will not conduce to the public good without being subjected to the ungracious charge that it cares nothing about it. Critics of the President's policies are not rooting for defeat. We are hoping instead that Bush will back off from the ruinous prescription of endless war that Mr. Podhoretz has advanced in his recent essays.

DAVID C. HENDRICKSON
*Colorado College
Colorado Springs, Colorado*

TO THE EDITOR:

In Norman Podhoretz's world, everything is very simple. There are only two positions to take: uncritical praise of and obeisance toward the Bush administration, which places you on the side of all things good and virtuous, or opposition to the Bush Doctrine, in which case you are either French, an Iraqi insurgent, a right- or left-wing isolationist, a follower of Noam Chomsky, a superhawk, a liberal internationalist, a realist, or a member of the media, in which case you hate America and democracy.

For Mr. Podhoretz, the choice is clear. The rest of us may still have some hard-headed questions about what the Bush administration's policies are doing for and to America.

What is the evidence for Mr. Podhoretz's claim that "record levels of vituperation" were leveled against President Bush during the last election campaign; that Iraqi "insurgents were praying for the victory of John F. Kerry"; that the CIA is "hell-bent on sabotaging the Bush Doctrine"? Who are those people supposedly "in a position to know" that the State Department under Colin Powell was the most

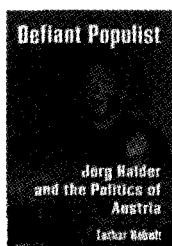
"insubordinate" in American history?

As evidence of the President's belief in the righteousness of the Bush Doctrine, Mr. Podhoretz cites the fact that he has kept Donald Rumsfeld on as Secretary of Defense. But this tells us nothing more than that Bush is unable to admit to a mistake. As anyone only cursorily familiar with his record understands, and as Kitty Kelly documents in her recent book on the Bush family, this is a man who does not take responsibility for anything. This would also explain why he recently awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to former CIA director George Tenet, who said it was a "slam dunk" that Iraq still had weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Podhoretz distorts reality when he writes of Abu Ghraib that "a half-dozen or so American guards had inflicted humiliation—mostly of a sexual nature—on a few Iraqi prisoners." Even the military's own investigations of Abu Ghraib have turned up evidence of egregious abuses by American troops. (The ACLU has catalogued hundreds of government documents detailing other instances of abuse and torture beyond Abu Ghraib.)

Also inaccurate is Mr. Podhoretz's mention of "the approximately 1,000 [U.S. troops] killed in combat over the entire span of the battle of Iraq." In fact, U.S. military fatalities reached 1,000 back around the beginning of September 2004, and as of this writing, over 25,000 members of the armed forces have suffered mental or physical injuries, including over 11,000 "seriously injured." To date,

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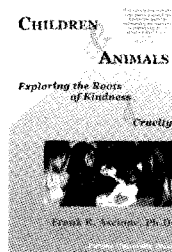
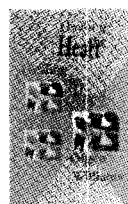
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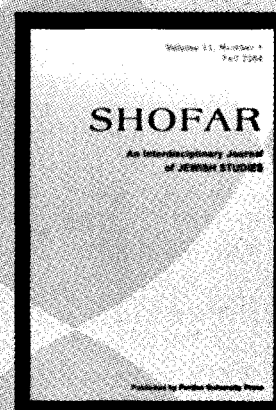
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DAVID ISENBERG
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's belief that the President will hold firm to the Bush Doctrine disregards what is fundamental to any hope of its success: money. Great powers inevitably decline when they overextend themselves financially in the effort to control their empires. If Mr. Podhoretz gave any thought to the costs of pressing forward with the Bush Doctrine, he certainly kept it to himself.

JOHN MURPHY
Laingsburg, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

I agree with Norman Podhoretz that President Bush is unlikely to "retreat" from the Bush Doctrine during his second term, but nothing in his article puts to rest my suspicion that the resources at the President's disposal do not match the level of his conviction. Perhaps Mr. Podhoretz's next piece can address directly how the President gets to where he wants to go, and how much it will cost us in blood and treasure.

SEAN DREW
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

President Bush has one factor working against his successful prosecution of World War IV: he has not asked for a declaration of war against radical Islam. Imagine if during World War II President Roosevelt had to go to Congress each time he wanted to open up a new front against the Axis powers. He would have had a distracting debate on his

hands when, for example, he wanted to invade Italy. No world war can be fought successfully in such a piecemeal fashion. By now it should be clear that the provision for a declaration of war was put into the Constitution for a reason.

DOUGLAS BOGGS
Kansas City, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's stimulating articles about World War IV and the Bush Doctrine demonstrate such clarity of thought that I hope his words get through to the highest levels of the Bush administration. Here are the intellectual underpinnings of what the President is trying to do.

THOMAS BURK
Pasadena, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's article was exceptionally brilliant, and its timing—with the Iraqi elections taking place only days after its publication—was serendipitous.

JOHN MCCARTHY
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for Norman Podhoretz's brilliant article on the Bush Doctrine and its detractors. The danger facing the West is clear, yet the opposition to the doctrine is overwhelming; it is invaluable to see its foundations argued with such thoroughness, clarity, and force.

DON MCPHERSON
Lewisville, Texas

NORMAN PODHORETZ
writes:

Let me begin by making it clear that no "rogue's gallery" compiled by me could possibly include Charles R. Kesler,

for the simple reason that I think the world of him, as a thinker, a writer, and an editor. But I also think that he is mistaken about World War IV and the Bush Doctrine. So, in my opinion, and even more profoundly, are his colleagues Angelo M. Codevilla and Mark Helprin, for both of whose intellectual powers I nevertheless have the greatest respect, and toward whom I have always felt, and still feel, great affection. The same goes for Edward N. Luttwak, even though, having drafted his brilliant mind into the service of one wild miscalculation after another in the run-up to the first Gulf War, he for some mysterious reason obdurately refuses to award it an honorable discharge so that it can return to doing the kind of invaluable work it did during World War III (a.k.a. the cold war).

Mr. Codevilla says of my comment about his attitude toward the Bush Doctrine that he is "guilty as charged," and then goes on to restate that attitude in his letter. But since by his own account I have accurately represented his position, I see no point in repeating what I said about it in the first place. As for my own attitude toward the Bush Doctrine, I am puzzled by Mr. Codevilla's allegation that I do not "explain its premises, its ends, or the means by which [I believe] it will succeed." Since he apparently failed to notice that I did all those things in "The War Against World War IV," and in three earlier articles in the pages of this magazine,* what good would a fifth iteration do?

With regard to Mr. Helprin, I take back "total mobilization," but not "super-

hawk." Surely anyone reading his litany of charges against the President's conduct of the war would be justified in concluding that Mr. Helprin is much more hawkish than I am, and while he may find me "adorable," I am (as Mr. Kesler notes) "usually" considered as hawkish as they come. Why not "superhawk" then?

Anyone reading that same litany would conclude that the Bush Doctrine has been discredited and that World War IV is a disaster; and so would anyone reading the indictments brought by Mr. Codevilla, Mr. Luttwak, and (to a lesser extent) Mr. Kesler. To most of the specific items they cite, my answers, again, were preemptively given not only in "The War Against World War IV," but in the three articles that preceded it. A far better answer, however, has been given by "reality itself"—the very reality Mr. Codevilla accuses Bush of refusing to accept.

Contrary to what Bush's critics so confidently predicted, and continue to assert, the use of American military power in Afghanistan and Iraq has indeed gone a long way toward draining the swamps and has already opened up a space in which the seeds of democratization are being sown and nourished (even as a few of Mr. Kesler's "alligators" temporarily remain at large).

Contrary to what Bush's critics so confidently predicted, and continue to assert, a benevolent domino

* "How to Win World War IV" (February 2002), "In Praise of the Bush Doctrine" (September 2002), and "World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win" (September 2004).

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effect, which is what some of us hoped for at the outset, has already begun taking political hold throughout the broader Middle East.

Contrary to what Bush's critics so confidently predicted, and continue to assert, the reformist wave he has let loose in the region has not only been sweeping over its politics but over its culture as well, and it has even seeped into the mosques. To Mr. Codevilla, "integrity" (no less) requires recognizing that "the culture of the majority of people in the Middle East is alien to freedom," and that "the notion of liberating peoples from their own cultural identities is nuts." Yet if he were to pay a visit to www.memri.org, he would find much evidence of just such nuttiness among the peoples of the region themselves. He might also wish to check out the streets of Beirut.

In sum, contrary to what Bush's critics so confidently predicted, and continue to assert, the mistakes made in Iraq (if mistakes they actually were rather than reasonable judgment calls as between equally problematic alternatives) have not prevented what with every passing day looks more and more like a great victory. Moreover, the signs now pointing toward successes in other countries in the region, beginning with Lebanon and Syria, suggest that at least in some cases they can be achieved without the ground troops whose numbers Mr. Luttwak, along with a thousand other experts, tirelessly assure us have been insufficient to accomplish what by some inexplicable process is in fact being accomplished in Iraq.

Mr. Kesler asks: Could we have done better? Of

course; it is always possible to do better in any enterprise. But considering that in a mere three years we have toppled vicious despotisms in Afghanistan and Iraq and set those two countries on the road to democratization; given that, by comparison with almost any military campaigns David Isenberg and Sean Drew could name, we have paid an amazingly low price in blood and treasure for doing this; and factoring in the social and political constraints under which (*pace* Mr. Codevilla) both campaigns had to be fought—with all this in mind, I seriously wonder how much better we could have done. Reading these letters, I again get the impression that—their disclaimers notwithstanding—the standard against which they measure the performance of the war is not a different set of (untested) tactics or policies, but perfection. Which is why the word "utopian" seems appropriate. And since that word means "nowhere," Mr. Kesler is just plain wrong in trying to turn the tables on me by applying it to the Bush Doctrine, whose effects are visible in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries of the Middle East, which is to say *somewhere*.

John Murphy and Mr. Drew raise the issue of whether the war is worth the cost. In doing so, they talk as though we are in it because we have chosen to be, and that we can by the same token just walk away if we decide that it is too expensive to fight. But this is not a war of choice; it is a war into which we were bombed on 9/11. Neither I nor Mr. Helprin nor Mr. Luttwak nor anyone else can

determine how much it will, or should, cost to win. But of one thing we can be certain: the price of defeat will be much higher—both in blood and treasure—than the price of victory, whatever that may turn out to be.

Speaking of defeat, the admiration I expressed for David Hendrickson's candor in rooting for it was not "mocking" at all. Evidently, however, I was wrong about the candor, though not, I hasten to add, about his position and that of many of his colleagues. In his article, he rooted for defeat by expressing the hope that the Bush Doctrine would "end in tears." Now he roots for the same outcome by hoping that its author will "back off"—in other words, that Bush will surrender before he is beaten. God save us all from such tenderly solicitous concern for "the public good."

As to the other charge I made against him, Mr. Hendrickson does not deny that he likened opponents of the Bush Doctrine (who no longer think that America is a "force for good in the world") with the ex-Communists who came to feel the same way about the Soviet Union because of the horrors of Stalinism. In drawing this monstrous comparison, he did not repudiate the inescapable implication of a correlative parallel between the "iniquities" to which the two disillusioned groups were responding. Having been called on it, he now throws in a belated disavowal, but all this accomplishes is to turn an implication into an insinuation. He also introduces a new comparison—between the Bush Doctrine and Trotskyism. This, I guess, is less virulent than

the comparison with Stalinism, or with the French Revolution, and yet even here Mr. Hendrickson cannot resist a sly resort to another repellent smear by bringing up totalitarianism. To be sure, having learned his lesson, he now provides himself with rhetorical cover ("This complex of ideas and conditions does not signify totalitarianism...."). But the noxious insinuation remains in the air. No wonder, then—with America in the grip of so many dangerous ideas and policies—that Mr. Hendrickson and his like-minded colleagues are, yes, rooting for its defeat.

Mr. Isenberg imagines that he is asking "hardheaded questions about what the Bush administration's policies are doing for and to America." But these questions are about as hardheaded as John Kerry's positions in his run for the presidency were nuanced. Does Mr. Isenberg really need "evidence" that the President—who in a Google search I have just this minute done turns up linked to Hitler nearly one-and-a-half *million* times—was subjected to "record levels of vituperation," or that the insurgents in Iraq were praying for a Kerry victory, etc. etc. etc.? Give me a break.

I disagree with Douglas Boggs's idea that Bush should have asked for a declaration of war against radical Islam. That would have been like asking for a declaration of war against Communism in 1947. Besides (and *pace* Mr. Kesler this time), the strategy Bush has adopted for fighting radical Islam is to topple the despotic regimes from which it receives nourishment, sanctuary, and a terrorist armory,

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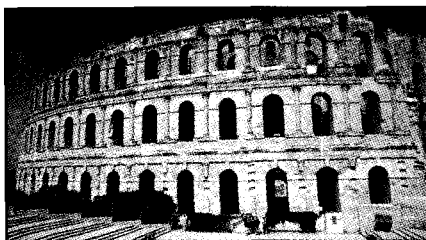
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Colosseum, Rome, Italy.

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Garrett G. Fagan is associate professor of history at Pennsylvania State University. A native of Dublin, Ireland, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Trinity College, Dublin, and was a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia.

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and then to replace them with political systems committed to building free institutions instead of waging jihad. In a nutshell, and as opposed to Mr. Kesler's use of the Wilsonian slogan, we are fighting to make the Middle East safe for America by making it safe for democracy.

Finally, my thanks to Thomas Burk, John McCarthy, and Don McPherson—and also to the many readers who communicated privately with me—for their generous words.

Sacred Words

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin asserts that the Bible, as a sacred book, "remains stubbornly resistant" to being read as literature, "despite its literary brilliance" ["Doing Justice to the Bible," February]. But to believe that the Bible is God's word does not preclude believing that God revealed Himself through literary devices. The rabbis were undoubtedly drawn to the literary beauty of the Song of Songs even as they struggled to understand the religious significance of a book containing many erotic passages. To read the Bible mainly as literature is to read it not with "bad faith" (as Mr. Halkin puts it), but rather with imperfect faith or, in many cases, with developing faith.

DORON BECKER
Potomac, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin is right to be skeptical of Robert Alter's claim that "in biblical dialogue all the characters speak proper literary He-

brew, with no intimations of slang." What was slang or vernacular Hebrew to the original readers of the Bible could have subsequently become "proper literary Hebrew" by virtue of the Bible's place in religious tradition.

We cannot be certain about the exact nuances of words and forms from three millennia ago, but the Hebrew Bible shows the same kinds of linguistic variation found in modern languages. In a verse Mr. Halkin happens to mention, Joseph is derided by his brothers as "*ba'al habalomot ha-lazeh*" (that master of dreams). "*Ha-lazeh*" is a very unusual form of the word for "that," and it might well have been drawn from slang to indicate deprecatory force.

ZE'V BAR-LEV
*San Diego State University
San Diego, California*

TO THE EDITOR:

In his excellent article, Hillel Halkin refers to the Hebrew letter *vav*, when deployed as a prefix, as the Bible's "ubiquitous 'and' that links phrases and sentences." It should be pointed out, however, that *vav* has more often a second, distinct meaning. When prefixed to a verb in the perfect (which normally indicates past action) or imperfect (which normally indicates future action), *vav* has the effect of reversing the tense. Early and classical grammarians called this usage the "*vav* conversive" or "*vav* consecutive," but the Academy of the Hebrew Language in Jerusalem has named it, quite simply, "*vav* marking the past/future."

Many translations conflate the two usages. A pas-

sage from the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis is rendered by the King James Version as follows: "And his brethren envied him. . . . And his brethren went to feed. . . . And Israel said unto Joseph. . . . And he said to him. . . ." The "ubiquitous 'and'" gives the text the air of a child's breathless patter, and misses the dramatic quality of the Hebrew narrative. To convey the effect of the *vav* conversive, judicious literary license is always called for. The Jewish Publication Society's translation is more fluent and agreeable: "So his brothers. . . . One time, when his brothers had gone. . . . Israel said to Joseph. . . . He answered. . . ."

SHLOMO KARNI
Corrales, New Mexico

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin errs when he writes that, "apart from the Aramaic Targum, no Jewish Bible translation has ever been venerated or regarded as more than a useful study aid." The Septuagint was produced in Hellenistic Egypt by and for Jews, and it was greatly valued. Philo of Alexandria, who some scholars think knew no Hebrew at all, treated its Greek wording as sacrosanct. Indeed, most Bible translations in the ancient world were undertaken by Jews in order to answer the needs of their non-Hebrew-speaking brethren. The rise of Christianity encouraged Jews to re-familiarize themselves with Hebrew, but for many centuries the Jewish Bible was for all intents and purposes a Greek text.

Mr. Halkin makes mention of Jerome's Vulgate as the first Latin Bible, but long before it came into be-

ing in the 4th century C.E., Latin-speaking Jews and Gentiles used the edition known as the "Old Latin." It took many centuries for the Vulgate to supplant this much-beloved work; Saint Augustine reports that a bishop who tried using Jerome's newfangled version of Jonah was almost lynched by his congregation.

ISAAC MEYERS
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin's article provides us with the best review to date of Robert Alter's *The Five Books of Moses*. But it is difficult to accept Mr. Halkin's speculation that an edition of Alter's translation of the Pentateuch designed for the synagogue "could compete advantageously" with popular editions like the JPS or the Soncino. Mr. Halkin does not mention what Alter stipulates in his introduction, namely, that his translation occasionally varies from the Masoretic text of the Bible, the traditional Hebrew edition that sets down the Bible's words, vowels, accents, and sentence and section units. Synagogues have been using the Masoretic text since at least 930 C.E. when it was codified by Aaron ben Asher in Tiberias.

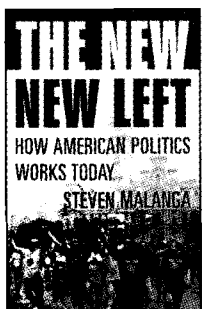
HESHEY ZELCER
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

The subtle penetration and delightful provocation that are characteristic of COMMENTARY are nowhere more perfectly manifested than in Hillel Halkin's "Doing Justice to the Bible." Thank you.

CARL COHEN
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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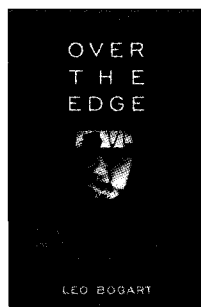
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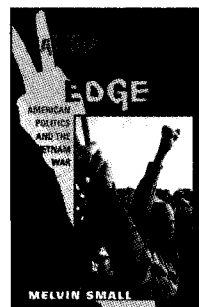
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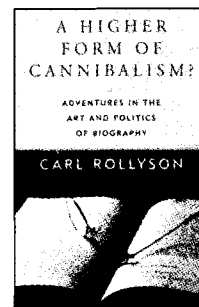
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HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Doron Becker's reasoning puzzles me. The fact that a divinely revealed Bible can also be read as literature does not mean that a Bible read as literature must also be divinely revealed—and reading the Bible “just” as literature is reading the Bible as it does not wish to be read. If, however, by reading it with “imperfect” or “developing” faith Mr. Becker means reading it in the hope or suspicion that it might be more than just literature, I would agree that this is a different matter.

I agree, too, with Zev bar-Lev about “*ba-lazeh*.” It is entirely possible that when Joseph's brothers say to one another, “*Hineh ba'al ha-balomot ba-lazeh ba*,” this would have sounded to an ancient Hebrew very much like “Hey, here comes that there dream-master.”

The question of the “*vav* conversive” is too complex to be dealt with adequately in this space. Yet surely even Shlomo Karni would concede that frequently in the Bible (in fact, wherever it occurs in mid-sentence) this *vav* functions both as a tense-reverser and as a conjunction—that is, the two usages are conflated by the rules of biblical prose itself. Thus, for example, in the verse from the first chapter of Genesis, “*Va-yevarekh Elohim et yom ha-shevi'i va-yekadesh oto*”—“[And] God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it”—there can be no doubt that the second “*va-*” means “and” at the same time that it changes *yekadesh* from a present/future-tense verb to a past-tense one. Does the “*vav* conversive” do such double duty at the beginning of sentences as well? My own

sense of the matter, as well as that of most Bible translators, is that it does.

I stand corrected by Isaac Meyers on the subject of Jerome's Vulgate. Whatever Philo may have thought of the Septuagint, however, rabbinic tradition is at best ambivalent toward it and even states in the tractate of *Soferim* that the day the Bible was translated into Greek was “as intolerable for Israel as the day the golden calf was made.” This falls somewhat short of veneration.

Heshey Zelcer can rest assured that the Alter translation departs from the Masoretic text in only a few places, which could easily be adjusted for synagogue use.

I thank Carl Cohen for his appreciative remarks.

Jewish Politics

TO THE EDITOR:

I do not know how old Jay Lefkowitz is, but he certainly could not have been relying on memory when he categorized President Dwight D. Eisenhower as a Jewish favorite because he “seemed most likely to support Israel, with military force if necessary” [“The Election and the Jewish Vote,” February]. Who among those old enough to have voted in the 1950's can forget Eisenhower's blunt threat to take away the United Jewish Appeal's tax-exempt status as he marched ten Jewish leaders into the White House and demanded that Israel vacate the territory it had conquered in the 1956 Suez crisis?

Mr. Lefkowitz mentions Jimmy Carter's unremark-

able call in 1977 for a “Palestinian homeland,” but it would have been fair also to note that Carter was the first President to describe Israel as a “strategic asset.” Mr. Lefkowitz also shades the story a bit when he describes the relationship between George H.W. Bush and Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir as “frigid.” It is doubtful that any American president could have had a warm relationship with an old-line Irgun/Lehi Revisionist who made his stated policy of foot-dragging into a political art.

Mr. Lefkowitz never actually spells out that 75 percent of Jewish voters went against Bush last November. He is probably correct to say that the percentages will not change. The quip that Jews live like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans remains accurate, and is a sign that most Jews continue to take the message of Isaiah to heart.

HAROLD TICKTIN

Shaker Heights, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

A few footnotes should be added to Jay Lefkowitz's survey of the Jewish vote. One of the main reasons for the 1928 swing in Jewish voting toward Al Smith and the Democrats was that Smith was a decisive voice in beating back the influence of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was a major force in the Democratic party during the 1920's, and Smith became a champion in Jewish eyes for opposing it. Then came FDR's appeal to brotherhood and helping the poor, and Jewish voters were hooked. Today, Jews over the age of sixty are still mesmerized by the aura of FDR, and continue to punch the Democratic ticket.

On the other hand, it

now appears that younger Jews are becoming more aware of the intrusion of government into their lives, and they are more willing to consider which party represents their views on issues like taxes and educational choice. It seems to me that the Orthodox Jewish constituency, which leaned toward George W. Bush and the Republicans in the last election, has a good sense of what Jewish interests are in a country that has always granted maximum freedom to Jews.

Still, Milton Friedman summed things up accurately when he wrote: “The basic beliefs of Judaism are one thing; the way Jews vote is very different. Jews and Judaism prosper in a world of economic and human freedom. The Jews in the United States overwhelmingly vote for measures designed to limit economic and human freedom.” I continue to hope that more Jews will begin to connect the dots that link the principles of Judaism with conservative philosophies that promote freedom.

LARRY F. STERNBERG
Santa Ana, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I am in my seventies and live in a retirement village in New Jersey, where in the year leading up to the election the display of bitterness toward George W. Bush was unbelievable. Dennis Prager once said that liberalism is the true religion of the majority of Jews in America. Among members of my own generation, I would be more tolerated if I were to declare myself an atheist or a Marxist than if I were to declare myself a Republican. It is a bad sign for Judaism when Jews care more about their

FRANCOPHOBIA



As Denis Boyles writes in the introduction to *Vile France: Cheese, Wine, Fear and Envy*:
“What we mistakenly see as a craven, anti-Semitic, hypocritical, hysterically anti-American, selfish, overtaxed, culturally exhausted country bereft of ideas, fearful of its own capitulation to fundamentalist Islam, headed for a demographic cul de sac, corrupted by lame ideologies, crippled by a spirit-stomping social elite, and up to its neck in a cheesy soufflé of multi-layered bureaucracy, is actually worse than all that. It’s vile.”

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liberalism than about the war on terror and the survival of Israel.

IRWIN DAVIS
*Monroe Township,
New Jersey*

TO THE EDITOR:

Jay Lefkowitz's article broke out the Jewish vote in the 2004 Presidential election in terms of its Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and even Russian components, but he did not focus on the Sephardic vote. I have to guess that at least 5 to 10 percent of Jews in the U.S. have origins in Arab lands, where Jews were subjected to abuse, intimidation, and mistreatment. They support Bush's waging of the war on terror because they understand the culture of hate created by the despotic regimes of the Middle East.

ALBERT ALGAZI
Yardley, Pennsylvania

JAY LEFKOWITZ writes:

Harold Ticktin strives mightily to understate the importance of Jimmy Carter's call in 1977 for a Palestinian homeland, less than four years after Arab nations tried to drive Israel into the sea in the Yom Kippur war. But American Jews were, on the whole, under no illusions about Carter. While he may have paid some lip service to the notion that Israel was a "strategic asset," his actions betrayed his true feelings. Then, as now, Carter thought that the U.S. role in the Middle East was to serve as a mediator between two morally equivalent sides. In the 1980 presidential election, despite the support he may have received from people like Mr. Ticktin, Carter got less than 50 percent of the Jewish vote—the poorest showing for a Democrat since the 1920's.

Mr. Ticktin correctly notes that Eisenhower put great pressure on Israel to withdraw from territory it had captured in the 1956 Sinai war and even threatened to take away the tax-exempt status of the United Jewish Appeal. Still, the fact remains that Eisenhower received sizable percentages of the Jewish vote in both of his elections. Indeed, whatever ill will he may have generated in the Jewish community probably redounded more to the electoral detriment of his Vice President, Richard Nixon, in the 1960 campaign. The Sinai war itself was fought less than two weeks before the 1956 election, and probably had little impact on the vote.

I appreciate the sentiments of Larry F. Sternberg and Irwin Davis, both of whom are concerned that American Jews often embrace political liberalism at the expense of certain Jewish values. Secular humanism, the philosophical underpinning of liberalism, is clearly in conflict with the Jewish belief in divine moral authority. Mr. Sternberg is right that Jews benefit enormously from the economic and political freedoms that America stands for and that President Bush is trying to promote; Mr. Davis is equally correct that among older Jews, being a Republican is still seen as a badge of shame. Unfortunately, many older American Jews have a hard time seeing beyond FDR, whose party they believed was squarely in their corner.

Mr. Sternberg points out that Al Smith's strength in the Jewish community was due in part to his strong stance against bigotry at a time when anti-Semitism (largely from the political

Right) was a problem in the United States. Today, the Jewish community needs to recognize that it is mainly liberals with "nonjudgmental" approaches to matters like the Middle East conflict who encourage political anti-Semitism.

I know of no exit-poll data on the voting trends of Sephardic Jews in America, but my own experience from giving speeches in Sephardic communities confirms what Albert Algazi says.

Muslim Apostasy

TO THE EDITOR:

As a former editor of the *Cumberland Law Review* who worked on the article by Ali Khan that Daveed Gartenstein-Ross criticizes ["When Muslims Convert," February], I want to address his complaint that Khan "was able to use an American law review as a soapbox from which to advocate the licensed punishment of apostates—and that his grossly illiberal views were never rebutted in its pages."

In fact, Khan's article was part of a symposium on religious proselytizing in which he was the odd man out. The first two papers presented the standard Western, libertarian view that proselytizing is a form of free speech. Khan presented the alternative view about as well as it could be presented to an American audience. Another scholar presented a moderate argument—that the right to argue freely about religion is a blessing, but that Americans ought to understand that the grossness of our popular culture does not make our libertarian ideals an easy sell in

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JOSEPH D. WILKINSON, II
An Nasiriyah, Iraq

TO THE EDITOR:

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross's commendable essay discusses some of the problems faced by apostates from Islam to other religions, but it reads as though apostasy from Islam to atheism or agnosticism did not exist. The omission is puzzling in light of the recent publication of *Leaving Islam*, a collection of essays by Muslim apostates edited by Ibn Warraq, author of the classic *Why I Am Not a Muslim*.

As it happens, the Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society, which was founded by Ibn Warraq and which I currently direct, has been dealing with the issues that Mr. Gartenstein-Ross cogently describes since 1998. As our mission statement puts it, we stand for "freedom of expression, freedom of thought and belief, freedom of intellectual and scientific inquiry, freedom of conscience and religion—including the freedom to change one's religion or belief—and freedom from religion: the freedom not to believe in any deity."

In the minds of certain Muslims, this rather mild declaration expresses the intent to commit a crime. It is crucial that those of us who uphold freedom of conscience stand together against such zealots, re-

gardless of our other doctrinal commitments.

IRFAN KHAWAJA
Ewing, New Jersey

DAVEED GARTENSTEIN-ROSS writes:

Joseph D. Wilkinson II's letter reflects the tendency of many within the academy to avert their eyes from Islamist brutalities. The fact is that Ali Khan used an American law review as a platform from which to advocate the licensed punishment of apostates. He wrote that "Muslims of all nations and all times are under an irrevocable obligation" to enforce the integrity of Islam, of which the punishment of apostates is a part.

Not only is Mr. Wilkinson unable to recognize the repugnance of this view—which would make it a crime to convert out of Islam even in the liberal West—he cannot even speak frankly of it. He explains that Khan's article was part of a symposium on "religious proselytizing," which is true, but irrelevant considering that Khan's prescriptions extend to the offense of apostasy. In any case, both proselytism and apostasy (the subject of my article) bear upon the bedrock rights of freedom of speech and belief. That either should be punishable—as is the case in so many contemporary nation-states—is an affront to human dignity.

Mr. Wilkinson states, rather lamely, that Khan "presented the alternative view [that there is no right to proselytism] about as well as it could be presented to an American audience." But even on his own relativistic terms, I fail to see how arguing that Muslims have the irrevocable obligation to

punish apostates makes for effective advocacy against proselytism.

While I agree with Mr. Wilkinson that symposia ought to contain "contrasting views presented by articulate speakers and writers," I find it axiomatic that not all views are worth airing. Should Holocaust denial be included in a symposium on the Holocaust? The white supremacist view in a symposium about slavery? Mr. Wilkinson might bear in mind that the legal status of apostasy is not an inconsequential academic issue. Many individuals are killed for leaving Islam, many more are physically assaulted, and thousands are driven underground in the practice of their new faiths.

This fact is understood and appreciated by Irfan Khawaja, who notes my lack of attention to the less common phenomenon of Muslims leaving Islam for atheism or agnosticism. Ibn Warraq has indeed shown tremendous courage in speaking frankly about his own apostasy from Islam, and in forcefully advocating the right of others to do the same. Irfan Khawaja is of course right that those who believe in freedom of conscience should stand together against Islamists who believe that apostates from Islam deserve death. I would add that we should also not hesitate to refute Western apologists for this view.

Casualties

TO THE EDITOR:

Writing in the "Letters" section of the April COMMENTARY, in response to Algis Valiunas's "Sartre vs.

Camus" [January], Neil Ford cites a figure of 100,000 civilian casualties in the war in Iraq. With this horrific number in mind, he suggests that Albert Camus's admonition against "mass murder on behalf of noble ideas" should be applied to the American "adventure" in that country. In his reply, Mr. Valiunas rightly notes that many more civilians—perhaps a half-million in all—perished under the tyrannical rule of Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Valiunas might have added that the figure of 100,000 adduced by Mr. Ford has itself been thoroughly debunked. It originated in a 2004 study published in the British medical journal *Lancet*, which employed statistical sampling techniques to generate an "estimate" of 98,000 civilian deaths. Buried in the study, however, is a startling caveat about the "confidence interval" assigned to this estimate. Translated into plain English, the *Lancet* study asserts a 95-percent probability that the casualty range falls somewhere between a low of 8,000 and a high of 194,000 deaths. The oft-cited 100,000 is merely a random midpoint between these two wildly separated extremes. Most observers, including even officials of the left-wing Human Rights Watch, believe that figure to be seriously inflated. Before the *Lancet* study was released, no reputable estimate of civilian deaths from the Iraq war exceeded 16,000.

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The Bush Doctrine's Next Test

Victor Davis Hanson

ON MARCH 14, at about the same time Western antiwar groups were organizing their annual spring demonstrations against American efforts in the Middle East, nearly a million Lebanese, including Sunni Muslims, Druze, and Christians, took to the streets of Beirut. Unlike the unhappy and despairing Westerners marching in the large cities of Europe and the United States over the last three years, the cheerful and idealistic Lebanese were not bearing placards of George W. Bush made to look like Adolph Hitler. Nor did they shout condemnations of the "Zionist entity."

Instead, at some risk to themselves, the demonstrators in Beirut demanded the withdrawal of Syrian troops and the creation of a legitimate government in an independent Lebanon. In this brave effort, they were following in the footsteps of an earlier, spontaneous Lebanese protest over the February 14 assassination, almost certainly at the order of Damascus, of Rafik al-Hariri, the country's former prime minister. In sheer numbers, their March 14 outpouring dwarfed not only that February demonstration but a much publicized, Syrian-sponsored turnout by supporters of Hizballah just a week before.

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON, whose "*Has Iraq Weakened Us?*" appeared in the February COMMENTARY, is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a regular columnist for National Review Online and the Chicago Tribune. His new book, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War*, will be out from Random House in August.

The mere fact that the terrorists of Hizballah have now found themselves outnumbered in an open tug-of-war with popular dissidents, and in the humiliating position of publicly supporting the foreign occupation of their own country, is as good an indicator as any of the dizzying pace of change in the post-Saddam Hussein Middle East. The successful elections in Afghanistan in October 2004; the January 30 voting in Iraq; the Palestinian election of Mahmoud Abbas following the ostracism and death of Yasir Arafat; the grassroots furor in Lebanon—all these have created a perfect storm of sorts for Arab and Muslim strongmen. In fear both of American wrath and of their own disenfranchised masses, most of the jittery autocrats in the region are now scrambling to repackage themselves as, at the very least, parliamentarians in disguise. Facing a canceled visit from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's president for life, went so far as to promise multiparty elections later this year. Even the Gulf sheikdoms have spoken of municipal voting that could theoretically include women.

Western political elites have similarly been caught off-guard by this turn of events, so threatening to their settled conviction that the situation in the region has gotten worse, not better, in the aftermath of the controversial, American-led invasion of Iraq. Only a year ago, Dana Milbank and Robin Wright were writing in the *Washington Post* that "President Bush took the nation to war in Iraq

with a grand vision for change in the Middle East and beyond. . . . Things have not worked out that way, for the most part.” But a year later, the *Post*’s Jackson Diehl, a longtime critic of the administration, was suddenly upbeat: “Arabs are marching for freedom and shouting slogans against tyrants in the streets of Beirut and Cairo—and regimes that have endured for decades are visibly tottering. Those who claimed that U.S. intervention could never produce such events have reason to reconsider.”

INDEED, THE present upheavals are reason not just to reconsider, but to give thanks and to celebrate. But no one can as yet predict exactly what will follow from them. As we have seen in Iraq and elsewhere, so fractured and violent are the societies now struggling to liberate themselves from the legacy of tyranny that an unthinking optimism is almost as foolhardy as a false pessimism. The autocrats, whose regimes and whose very lives now lie under threat, have no other choice but to push back against dissidents and popular pressures; nor can we be sure that an opening of these closed systems will usher in an era of democracy in the Western sense. And in the meantime, as some skeptics have not hesitated to point out, the astounding success of the Bush Doctrine has made it all the harder to ignore certain fault lines in existing American policy.

Specifically, the Bush administration is said to be guilty of gross inconsistency. While vigorously promoting the benefits of democracy for Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Syria, it has given a free pass to three regimes in particular that have long been regarded not as enemies but as key allies: Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, Pakistan in nearby South Asia. When it comes to dealing with these troubled, populous, and powerful Muslim nations, as Thomas Carothers put it in a February 2003 essay in *Foreign Affairs*, “Bush the neo-Reaganite” suddenly becomes “Bush the realist,” actively cultivating warm relations with “friendly tyrants” of the most unsavory sort. Until this “uncomfortable dualism” is resolved, Carothers concluded, not only “the future of the war on terrorism but also . . . the shape and character of Bush’s foreign policy as a whole” will remain in doubt.

The objection is compelling. Picking and choosing among authoritarian regimes—heavily pressuring Iran and Syria while going lightly on Egypt and Saudi Arabia—suggests that we seek not a universal democratization of the Middle East but rather compliant governments of any autocratic or monarchic kind that will share and serve American

interests, so long as they do not overtly support terror. In a war of ideas, such perceived hypocrisy—a major theme of Osama bin Laden’s infomercials damning U.S. support for the Saudi royal family—can be extremely detrimental.

Nor is inconsistency the only problem. Tens of thousands of American soldiers are fighting in the belief that replacing dictators with democrats is not only smart for America but good for the people of the Middle East. How can we go on asking them to die for freedom in the Sunni Triangle while their government subsidizes dictatorship in Egypt and Pakistan—the former a weak heartbeat away from a populist revolt, the latter a bullet away from theocracy?

The President’s bold plan appears to be based on a model of democratic contagion. We have seen such infectious outbreaks of popular government in Latin America and Eastern Europe, so we know the prognosis is not fanciful. But in the Muslim and Arab Middle East, democracy has no real pedigree and few stalwart proponents. Thus, recalcitrant autocracies will inevitably serve as sanctuaries and strongpoints for those trying to reverse the verdict in an Afghanistan, an Iraq, or a Lebanon; the idea that these same anti-democratic societies are *supported* by the U.S. is presently embarrassing and eventually unsustainable.

Fortunately, however, the reverse is also true. A metamorphosis of these same dictatorships would help accelerate the demand for democratization elsewhere. Far from representing a distraction in the struggle against current front-line enemies like Iran and Syria, the reformation of Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia would only further isolate and enfeeble those states—as William Tecumseh Sherman’s “indirect approach” of weakening the rear of the Confederacy, at a considerably reduced loss of life, helped to bring to a close the frontline bloodshed of northern Virginia, or as Epaminondas the Theban’s freeing of the Messenian helots dismantled the Spartan empire at its very foundations.

Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are not the equivalent of the Soviet Union’s satellite states of Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania. Rather, they are the East Germany, Hungary, and Poland of the unfree Middle East: pivotal nations upon whose fate the entire future of the Bush Doctrine may well hinge.

DURING THE cold war, sound strategic logic lay behind the decision to strike de-facto alliances with the three autocracies. At the time, the

principles of realpolitik were well understood. Our aims were to keep Communists out of the Persian Gulf; to insure a steady supply of oil for the energy-hungry West and Japan; and, when possible, to isolate Baathists, Islamists, and Qaddafi-like megalomaniacs who subsidized anti-Western terrorists. At the same time, we sought to nudge our "friendly tyrants" in the direction of nonviolence and moderation.

Most but not all of these goals were met. Some \$50 billion in aggregate American aid to Egypt since the Sadat turnaround of the late 1970's bought a tangible restraint in external behavior. Aside from machinations in the Gaza Strip and occasional bickering with Libya, and despite rumors about a program to develop weapons of mass destruction, Egypt has eschewed aggression against its neighbors. President Mubarak does not, and probably cannot, attack Israel.

As for Saudi Arabia, having once imposed oil embargoes on the United States, it has lately contented itself with production curbs and price hikes in lieu of outright cut-offs. So long as Americans remain addicted to \$50-a-barrel imported oil, and avoid alternative energy policies, the continuance of the OPEC monopoly will be the devil's bargain that precludes artificially induced gas lines here at home. Pakistan, meanwhile, for all its internal turmoil, is a different sort of place from Syria or Iran, and Pakistani mobs no longer rush into the streets as they did in 1979, eager to torch the U.S. embassy.

Even more importantly, the three countries have a record of extending occasional help to the United States in its wars both against Communists and later against terrorists. Sadat expelled Soviet advisers and shut down Russian bases in Alexandria. Pakistan served as a conduit for American arms reaching resistance fighters in Afghanistan in the early 1980's; without the sanctuary it then provided for those fighters, the Soviets would probably have annexed the country. Saudi Arabia and its affiliates routinely invited Washington to base ships in the Persian Gulf and patrol the sea lanes in order to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its grip eastward and southward from Libya, Syria, and Iraq—and to ensure that Saddam Hussein would leave Kuwait in the early 1990's. Anti-American terrorists who have gotten too near the Saudi royal family have been mercilessly hunted down, often to the advantage of the United States.

In the brutal calculus of the Middle East, the autocratic triad also never quite descended to the depravity of a Saddam Hussein, who butchered over a

million people during his 30-year thugocracy and attacked four of his neighbors. Nor could they even be compared with the three-decade dictatorship of the Assads of Syria, who did away with 20,000 citizens and bulldozed the town of Hama, or the murderous Iranian regime that is now seeking nuclear weapons and threatening many of its neighbors. It is unlikely that an Arafat or an Abu Nidal could have taken up open residence in Cairo or Riyadh.

IN SHORT, ties with Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia were of convenience to the U.S., and from time to time they proved their worth. Yet honesty compels one to add immediately that on nearly as many occasions, these alliances did not do even that. Indeed, President Bush's withering and often quoted critique of foreign-policy "realism"—designed to provide stability, it has served historically to foster and tolerate instability—applies with special accuracy to these three erstwhile friends.

Egypt, the guardian of the Suez Canal and the cultural and ideological center of the Arab world, is also the incubator of many of its worst pathologies. Both the Muslim Brotherhood and Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arabism grew out of the mosques, universities, and salons of Cairo, and today Egypt is among the world's premier exporters of anti-Semitic propaganda. Pakistan possesses and helps spread nuclear weapons and their supporting technology. It has engaged in periodic atomic stand-offs with its neighbor, democratic India, and thousands of square miles on its western flanks remain de-facto terrorist badlands.

Saudi Arabia, sitting atop a quarter of the world's known oil reserves, is the benefactor of most of the virulent Wahhabism that proliferates in *madrassas* throughout the Middle East and has crept insidiously into the West. It is hard to find a terrorist arrested in Europe or in the United States who has not been indoctrinated by Saudi-sponsored teachings of hate or is not in thrall to the country's religious operatives.

In the last decade, Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia have done much to hurt the United States. Fifteen of the nineteen suicide hijackers on 9/11 were Saudis. Mohammed Atta, the tactical mastermind, was an Egyptian, an epitome of the anti-Americanism that, along with anti-Semitism, has made his country a spiritual locus of hatred for the West. If it seems natural that Osama bin Laden should be a Saudi, it is no less natural that his sinister sidekick, Dr. Zawahiri, is an Egyptian.

Bin Laden, a Saudi millionaire, planned 9/11.

Another Saudi, Ahmad Sayyid Ahmad al-Ghamdi, a medical student and son of a diplomat, blew up 22 Americans in Mosul, Iraq on December 21, 2004. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, a Saudi American with strong ties to his spiritual motherland, has been charged with planning to kill President Bush. On November 5, 2004, 26 influential Saudi clerics subsidized by the royal family issued a *fatwa* demanding long-term jihad against the United States forces in Iraq; the Muslim Scholars Association, composed of Sunni clerics strongly sympathetic to Saudi Wahhabism, has worked strenuously to undermine American reconstruction efforts. All this is no accident.

During the 2001 military campaign in Afghanistan, General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan was at times more a neutral than an enemy. Yet his own intelligence service had helped to create the Taliban in the first place, with the tab picked up by the U.S., whose past billions in largesse were intended to keep this Westernized strongman and his predecessors in place. With government approval, Dr. A.Q. Khan, a national hero to Pakistanis as the father of their own bomb, made possible a nuclear North Korea—and perhaps soon a nuclear Iran as well.

Few agencies have hurt the interests of the U.S. as thoroughly or as directly as the Pakistani intelligence services. The Taliban's Mullah Omar is currently residing in Pakistan. His whereabouts, along with Dr. Zawahiri's, are probably known to informants, as, no doubt, are bin Laden's. Yet we are regretfully told that the Pakistani regime cannot track down any of these men without risking a tidal wave of Islamic resentment—a sure sign, if we needed one, of the regime's own fundamental illegitimacy.

During the Clinton years, two American diplomats were assassinated in Karachi, and in March 2002 American Christians were murdered at a church in Islamabad. Beside the televised beheading of Daniel Pearl, four American contractors were butchered in Pakistan in 1997 on the news that an American jury had convicted a Pakistani terrorist of assassinating two CIA employees in Virginia. While we now worry about jihadists pouring into the Sunni Triangle from Syria and Iran, just three years ago Islamists flooded out of the *madrassas* of Pakistan to hike unimpeded into Afghanistan to help the Taliban.

Inside these three countries, media subsidized (or censored) by the regime have imbued millions with hatred of the United States and Israel. Seldom mentioned is any hint of what Americans have

done in behalf of Muslims, whether it is past debt relief and billions in aid for Egypt and Pakistan, protection of Saudi Arabia from Saddam Hussein, help for Afghani Muslims against the Soviets, for Kosovars and Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs, for Kuwaitis against Saddam, for Somali Muslims facing starvation, for Indonesians recovering from disaster. The logic here is simple. The more venomous and rabble-rousing these state-run megaphones, the less blame will attach to Mubarak, Musharraf, and the Saudi royal family for the often miserable condition of their own people, and the less blackmail they will need to pay to terrorists and jihadists to stay away from home and concentrate instead on faraway Americans and Jews.

THIS WAS the mess that the Bush administration sought to clean up after 9/11, by holding out the prospect of an alternative for the expression of popular frustration in the Middle East. And the new American policy is paying real dividends, as no less an authority than the Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, of impeccably anti-American and anti-Israel credentials, explained in late February:

It's strange for me to say it, but this process of change has started because of the American invasion of Iraq. I was cynical about Iraq. But when I saw the Iraqi people voting three weeks ago, 8 million of them, it was the start of a new Arab world.

Can the initiative be extended to the three "friendly tyrants"? There can be no denying that, in their case, there are real and quite understandable obstacles in the way of rethinking the status quo—impediments that help explain American hesitancy thus far.

For one thing, there has grown up among us a sizable cadre of diplomats, think-tank scholars, weapons salesmen, investors, and former military officers, Right and Left, who know and like immensely the Westernized—and generous—ruling cliques of these nations. Others in the American corporate, political, and intellectual world, even if they have not forged profitable ties themselves, are firmly of the view that the autocrats in place in these countries are about as good as the United States can hope to obtain, especially as compared with some of the bleak alternatives on offer elsewhere in the region: Baathists, Islamic fascists, theocrats—and chaos. Precisely because of the relationships they have formed with prominent Americans, and their carefully cultivated veneer of moderation, the elites of Egypt, Pakistan, and

Saudi Arabia have earned a certain credible exemption for their annoying habit of aiding and abetting jihadists.

"One man, one vote, one time"—such is the minatory cliché with which realists warn us away from headline-grabbing plebiscites. Do we really want to risk replacing the Saudi royal family or a Mubarak-style Egyptian dictatorship with jihadists of the Muslim Brotherhood stamp or Iranian-style fundamentalists who will only pursue their hatred of Israel, of the United States, and of the West under the cloak of "democratic" legitimacy? Look at what happened in Lebanon in the 1980's or Algeria in the 1990's, not to mention in Iran after the Shah. If Saddam's barbarity is exhibit A of what can evolve from the sometimes cynical appeasement of stability, the Taliban, like their Shiite counterparts in Iran, proved the awful sequel to toppled, but stable, dictatorships.

Considerations like these have led pillars of realism like James Baker, Frank Carlucci, Colin Powell, and Brent Scowcroft to harbor a skeptical view of George W. Bush's apparent conversion to democratic idealism. And certainly, with regard to the three volatile regimes, the administration's task is delicate beyond words. It seeks greater democracy, but not anarchy; popular government, but not of the viciously anti-American stripe; peaceful evolution, but not the sanctioning of another intransigent autocracy.

Yet, in the explosive Middle East, doing nothing, which is essentially what realist advice amounts to, is no longer an option. For better or worse, now is hardly the time to let up on the pressure for democratic change. To the contrary, it is precisely the hour to increase such pressure wisely.

An obvious first step is to mark our distance from the three autocracies—indeed, we have already begun to do so, if with nowhere near the required consistency. With tact, American separation need not appear overtly punitive, nor need we gratuitously slander former allies even as we publicly prefer their internal voices of reform. Secretary Rice's decision to avoid Egypt on her recent Middle East trip was what prompted Mubarak to pledge Egypt's first multiparty presidential election later this year, and is a model of what can be done in the short term.

In the post-cold-war world, it has become increasingly harder to justify direct financial assistance to these regimes in the form of arms sales, military credits, debt relief, or outright cash grants. American reminders of this reality may have influenced Musharraf to utter his own pledge of demo-

cratic elections in 2007 (just as our announcement in late March of a sale of F-16 jet fighters to Pakistan may unfortunately have suggested to him that we are not serious). If the realignment of our policy is explained carefully, domestic reformers can be assured that aid will return when constitutional guarantees of consensual government emerge—and when they themselves tone down the sort of anti-American posturing that enhances the realists' point about the outsiders we don't know being worse than the insiders we do. The idea is to make it clear, without appearing spiteful, that we intend something new and better—better, that is, for Arabs and Muslims—and that in pursuit of this aim we may well find ourselves bypassing the present ruling elites and risking state-fed popular umbrage.

EACH OF these regimes has, nearby, a polity that offers an instructive contrast. Democratic India, nuclear-armed, wary of China, increasingly tied to America, is a reminder to Pakistan that closer relations with the United States are attainable, but are increasingly problematical so long as Pakistan continues to languish under the control of a military dictatorship (balancing the recent announcement of F-16 sales to Pakistan, the White House pointedly reassured India about its own ability to purchase commensurate or even more effective combat aircraft from us). In the Middle East, the new Iraq—with oil reserves comparable in size to Saudi Arabia's, with a port on the Persian Gulf, and with its ongoing democratic transformation—is, for the time being, Washington's de-facto regional ally. That new alliance is already sending a strong message to Riyadh: the path to American friendship lies in ending Saudi support for those now killing Americans in the Sunni Triangle, and in following the paradigm of political reform.

Egypt has regional contrasts of a mixed sort. On one side, neighboring Libya is still a nightmarish state, now seeking Western involvement at a political price it may or may not prove willing to pay. On the other side, the elections that followed the death of the sequestered Yasir Arafat abruptly ended Egypt's traditional role in encouraging, and subsidizing, Palestinian revanchism. A self-appointed Mubarak cannot offer advice to an elected Abbas about how to jumpstart a nascent democracy. But America's continued promotion of change in Libya and the Palestinian Authority, coupled with American coolness toward autocratic Egypt, can be a powerful incentive for Cairo to embark on its own program of reform.

So far, with the obvious exceptions of Ayman

Nour and Saad Eddin Ibrahim, the names of few Egyptian dissidents are known to us. Ibrahim was released from prison in 2003 after only feeble American warnings of a cut-off in aid. With greater encouragement from Washington, thousands would surely emerge from the shadows, and with luck and fortitude they might prevent Gamal Mubarak from extending his father's dictatorship while also avoiding the alternative of an Islamic republic. Reformers among the royal family in Saudi Arabia and, in Pakistan, exiled opposition figures could be rescued from anonymity through international pressure to spotlight the Vaclav Havels and Lech Walesas of the Arab-Muslim world.

SUCH AN effort would have to be spearheaded by the U.S., but it could be supplemented by the "soft power" of the EU and the UN. True, the latter has devolved in the last 30 years into a corrupt organization whose writ around the globe is only as strong as the links binding the petty dictators gathered in the General Assembly. But both bodies can impart a certain legitimacy to events already in play. Since their habit has been to lend sanction and authenticity to tottering autocrats, in whose regimes they have often had a financial interest, neither Europe nor the UN can lead. But UN resolutions calling for Syria to leave Lebanon or for Saudi Arabia to end its sexual apartheid might bring some European nations into the general effort to promote change, or at least to provide valuable window dressing to an American-led *fait accompli*.

At home, the Left will continue to score points against the President, citing either the impracticality of his policy when news is bad or, when things seem headed in the right direction, decrying the

cultural chauvinism in thinking that Western concepts like democracy can be "privileged" over indigenous forms of rule. The Right will warn against the danger of betraying trusted allies, or of playing into the hands of popular extremists—or of giving an inside track to European and Chinese commercial interests that exhibit no such squeamishness about doing business with tyrants.

Some of these apprehensions are well grounded. Violent upheaval followed by Islamist coups could endanger world commerce well beyond oil, in the choke points of the straits of Hormuz and the Suez Canal. And, as we saw with Arafat on the one hand and the Iranian clerics on the other, plebiscites can indeed become the basis for years of Western appeasement of despotic rule. But a pre-9/11-like stasis is even worse: change is inevitable in any case, and there may be only a brief window to ensure that it is democratic and stays that way, rather than Islamist, reactionary, and/or nuclear.

In Egypt, Mubarak is old and failing. In Pakistan, Musharraf is unpopular and isolated, dependent on anti-Indian saber-rattling or on hauling in American largesse. In Saudi Arabia, the hold of the royals is increasingly fragile as unemployment soars and the connection among absconded petrodollars, autocracy, and Islamic fundamentalism is slowly being parsed by the Saudi people. So there is urgency in reassessing American policy toward those three formidable powers, and thereby in fostering democratic pressure around as well as in the now-key capitals of Damascus and Tehran. Thanks to American idealism and muscularity, President Bush's visionary policies are already bearing fruit. The next step is no less promising and no less dangerous, demanding the same bold energy and initiative as those that have gone before.

Jews, Arabs, and French Diplomacy

A Special Report

David Pryce-Jones

THE RESOUNDING slogan of “liberty, equality, fraternity,” leaves no room for racism in the French state, in theory. In practice, over the two centuries since that slogan was coined, rulers of France have tried with varying success to fit two peoples—Arabs and Jews—into their grand design for the French nation and for its standing in the world. Today, as long-held but misconceived ambitions collide, racism with its hates and fears increasingly plagues France, calling into question the relationship that the country’s Arab and Jewish minorities have with each other, that each has with the state, and that the state has with Arab nations on the one hand and with Israel on the other.

The official position taken toward French Jews goes back to the revolution of 1789. In December of that year, during a debate over granting citizenship to the country’s Jewish minority, Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, a liberal aristocrat, declared in the Constituent Assembly: “Everything must be refused to the Jews as a nation, and everything granted to the Jews as individuals.” This idea was soon enshrined in law. Behind it lay the suspicion

that Jews had their *own* brand of nationalism, one that cut across the French nationalism emerging from the revolution. To the French elite, moreover, Jews have consistently seemed to be the conspiratorial tools of others, first of Germany and Russia, then of Britain, and finally, in the 20th century, of Zionists.

What is remarkable is that, in spite of the unregenerate anti-Semitism revealed and unleashed by the Dreyfus Affair at the end of the 19th century, in spite even of French participation in the Nazi mass murder of World War II, French Jews have generally accommodated themselves to the state’s view of the necessary relation between them, and have been content, at least until recently, to downplay the ethnic element in their own identity as a people. This has, however, been less true of those hailing from French-speaking North Africa, who today make up the majority of the 600,000-strong community. In addition, the return of anti-Semitism during the last few years in France has willy-nilly raised the ethnic consciousness of even the most assimilated elements of the older community.

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ON THE Muslim and Arab side, although virtually no Muslims lived in France until the 20th century, the French state long regarded its vital interests as tied up in Arab lands. Napoleon Bonaparte’s 1798 campaign in Egypt and the French invasion of Algeria in 1830 were military adventures undertaken with the express purpose of

emulating imperial Britain: England might have India, but France could move into, and ultimately colonize, the Arab world. Moreover, France traditionally claimed the right to protect Catholics and Christianity in the Ottoman empire, and in the Holy Land in particular; in 1843, a French consulate opened in Jerusalem. By the 1850's, Napoleon III and his administration had elaborated the concept of a "Franco-Arab kingdom," grandiosely expanding this to visualize France itself as "a Muslim power" (*une puissance musulmane*).

In a gesture aimed at rewarding North African Arabs for their service in World War I, the Great Mosque of Paris was opened in 1926. But large-scale immigration did not begin until after the end of the Algerian war in 1958, when 250,000 so-called "harkis," Algerians who had opposed the nationalist movement, sought refuge in France. In the 1960's and 1970's, immigrants arrived steadily from each of the newly independent Maghreb countries. Initially they were allowed to come only as guest workers seeking to better themselves and return home, but a change of law in 1974 gave them residence and other rights.

The size of today's community is a matter of contention. A figure of upward of 6 million has long been accepted, but Nicolas Sarkozy, a one-time minister of the interior now aspiring to be president, and the semi-official newspaper *Le Monde* have both spoken of 5 million, while the demographer Michèle Tribalat has reduced this further to 3.65 million. Muslims tend to congregate in the outskirts of the great cities, where bad housing conditions and a lack of employment generate all the ills and violence of alienation. More than 5,000 mosques serve as community centers; at the national level, there is a representative Muslim institution, the *Conseil français du culte musulman* (CFCM). Some of the demands or practices of Islam being incompatible with bedrock republican secularism, embarrassing conflicts have arisen like the one over the right of Muslim girls to wear the *hijab* in school; it took the French authorities fifteen years to decide that this defied the constitution.

Depending on the figure one accepts, Muslim Arabs outnumber Jews in France by a factor of at least six to one, perhaps by as much as eight to one. As the number of Arabs rises, and as France fails to deliver on its promise of equality and prosperity, the question of their place as a minority has come increasingly to the fore. That question has been made all the more complicated by the fact that, over the decades, Arabs and Jews alike have transformed themselves from passive subjects of

history into active agents on the world stage, acquiring new identities and modern nation-states of their own.

FOR ARABS, one of the most evident signs of self-identity is hostility toward Jews and Israel. In a 2003 collection of essays about Islam in France, the sociologist Barbara Lefèbvre offered typical examples of this prejudice in the younger generation. Addressing a teacher, a boy in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis quotes his father: "There will be a final war between Muslims and Jews, and the Jews will be destroyed; it says so in the Qur'an." In another Paris district, a teacher overhears Arab children telling Jewish children: "Jewish dogs, we're going to burn Israel, go back to your country."

Of course, Arab aggression against Jews has been rising everywhere in the last decades. But it is particularly virulent in France, where it has been accompanied by occasional loss of life, street violence against individuals, and bombings of synagogues, restaurants, offices, and shops. For a long time, the authorities maintained that this was mere hooliganism rather than the manifestation of a vengeful jihad. (Many Arab ghettos are outside the law: no-go areas for the police.) But as it became clear that imams were using their mosques to preach anti-Semitism and the hatred of all non-Muslims, the agents of law enforcement at last began to take action. A number of extremists have been deported, and the police have been able to foil and arrest terrorists coming from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Morocco.

But this is to raise a much larger issue—namely, the differential attitude of the French elite toward Arabs and Jews. Much has been written about the role of European academics, intellectuals, and journalists in excusing, justifying, or sympathizing with Muslim anti-Semitism. But no less pertinent, and arguably more so, is the role of policy-makers. Ideas and attitudes work downward from the political elite that conceives them to the people who have to live with the consequences.

The French foreign ministry, generally referred to as the Quai d'Orsay, is the institution above all others in France that has been responsible for realizing the state's grand design and the political outcome that has followed from it. The archives of that institution, along with the testimony of generations of diplomats writing in their memoirs, show how a small number of highly motivated and carefully selected men have fostered preconceptions of Arabs and Jews that have now come to threaten the integrity of the French nation.

The Quai d'Orsay

SITUATED NEXT to the National Assembly on the left bank of the Seine, the Quai d'Orsay occupies a splendid building in the opulent style of 19th-century Paris. Here, both the site and the architecture declare, is where the nation's fate is shaped, by men of exceptional intelligence. Many of these men have had literary as well as diplomatic gifts: a huge body of memoirs harks back with nostalgia to the enduring club-like atmosphere of the place, symbolized in the tea ceremony at five o'clock where the Quai d'Orsay in its heyday used to gather and consolidate its collective thoughts.

Recurrent governmental instability has reinforced the importance of the Quai d'Orsay. Between September 1870 and August 1914, for example, there were no fewer than 30 foreign ministers of France; the pace of turnover was just as turbulent during the Fourth Republic (1949-59), improving only in today's Fifth. Although a few foreign ministers have been able to impose their own policy objectives, the majority have come and gone with bewildering rapidity and to little effect. Prime ministers have further devalued the position by often reserving it for themselves. In sum, foreign ministers have had to rely disproportionately on their permanent civil servants: not only their private staffs but the secretary-general of the Quai d'Orsay, also referred to as the political director, and the heads of its various departments.

From the start, the ministry was staffed by self-selected members of the aristocracy. Competitive examinations were introduced in 1894, but this and other reforms mainly served to perpetuate the ministry's sense of itself, handed down by the old to the young. In successive generations, the Cambons, Herbettes, Margerites, François-Poncets, and Courcels became nothing less than dynasties. In *The French Foreign Office and the Origins of the First World War, 1898-1914* (1993), H. B. Haynes writes that entry to the Quai d'Orsay was determined by "nepotism, patronage, and political persuasion [that was] Catholic and hostile to Jews and Protestants and the parliamentary system."

Indeed. A document in the archives from October 1893 reveals that "an Israelite" by the name of Paul Frédéric-Jean Grunebaum had applied to the personnel office of the Quai d'Orsay and wished to know "if this fact [was] of a kind to forbid him access to a diplomatic or consular career." The margin carries a note from Louis Herbet, secretary general at the time: "I saw M. Grunebaum, who spontaneously withdrew his request. . . . He bowed

with good grace to the motives dictating the department's decision."

By the 1920's, the diplomatic service was open to Jews, but they would have needed thick skins to survive. As J.-B. Barbier, who joined the Quai d'Orsay in 1904, commented in his memoirs, "the career had no Jews among its members, at least as far as the important governing levels were concerned." And this was a matter of some gratification since Jews, Barbier held, belonged to an "often parasitical ethnic element," and the way some of them had managed to penetrate the service was "disastrous." Against one of them, Jean Marx, the head of overseas cultural programs, Barbier would wage a passionate campaign as the epitome of the "anti-national Jew" who, duly backed by "International Jewry," had recruited unreliable and even traitorous people of his own kind.

Jews in the Mind of the Quai d'Orsay

THE HISTORICAL record displays evidence of unremitting hostility to Jews, decade after decade.

In 1840, a rumor spread in Damascus that an Italian Capuchin friar and his Arab servant had disappeared. The French consul in the city, Comte Ulysse de Ratti-Menton, immediately accused the Jewish community of ritual murder, and persuaded the Ottoman governor to arrest Jewish notables and hold Jewish children hostage. Some of the notables died under torture; others were forcibly converted to Islam.

The scandal rocked Europe, but Ratti-Menton was unrepentant and the Quai d'Orsay defended him. In the National Assembly, Prime Minister Adolphe Thiers complained that Jews were "besieging all the chancelleries with their petitions." When Arab media today depict ritual murder as a fact of Jewish life, they are retailing, whether they know it or not, lessons learned from French teachers long ago.

But the seminal event of the 19th century was the 1890's trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, the Jewish army officer falsely accused of betraying military secrets to the Germans. The conspiracy to prove Dreyfus guilty of treason was hatched in the ministry of war; the Quai d'Orsay stayed at a watchful distance. But when the guilty verdict was declared in December 1894, and partisans of Dreyfus's innocence refused to let the injustice stand, a number of ambassadors could be heard lamenting

* "The career" (*la carrière*) was shorthand for employment as a diplomat, as though no other career were worthy of the name.

the damage to France that the case was doing. The brilliant but slippery Maurice Paléologue represented the foreign ministry in 1899 at Dreyfus's successful appeal. He saw the documents, met the officers who had forged the incriminating evidence, looked hard at Dreyfus's face as the reprieve was about to be announced, and thought he could detect there a perduring Jewish trait: "an immense pride beneath a mask of humility." Fortunately, he would confide in a letter to a colleague, he himself was immune as a diplomat from prosecution.

Few men left a greater mark on the Quai d'Orsay than Paul Cambon, born in 1843, and his brother Jules, two years younger. Both were powerful personalities. Paul, ambassador in London for 22 years, was a principal architect of the Entente Cordiale with Britain. Jules served in Washington. Both were also involved with Arab affairs, Paul as resident in Tunisia, Jules as governor-general of Algeria. Paul believed that Dreyfus, as a Jew, was a traitor by definition, and appears to have changed his mind only once the appeal process had started; his brother Jules, in common with many other colleagues in the diplomatic service, persisted in thinking Dreyfus guilty to the end. To one of those colleagues (Auguste Gérard), the anti-Dreyfus forces were the "natural defenders" of the nation, the "true representatives of France and its genius."

Pogroms in czarist Russia were occurring at the same time as the Dreyfus trial in France. A. Bompard, ambassador in Saint Petersburg from 1902 to 1908 and a man much esteemed at the Quai d'Orsay, wrote in an August 1903 report: "I pass over in silence anti-Jewish disturbances such as those in Kishinev because they are, so to speak, on the rebound from agrarian disturbances. The Jewish population . . . is a nursery of nihilists and agitators." A year later, writing to Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé, he compared the Finns, "wise and calm," to the Jews, "detested but [economically] indispensable at the same time, themselves full of hatred as they hold the people to ransom and undermine authority."

In due course Paléologue succeeded Bompard at Saint Petersburg. Czarist policy toward the Jews, he asserted, seemed devised to sustain

their hereditary defects and their bad passions, to exasperate their hatred for *goyim*, to plunge them deeper into their talmudic prejudices, to affirm them in their state of permanent inner rebellion, to bring the indestructible hope of promised reparations shining in their eyes. . . .

[T]he vengeful and vindictive stubbornness of the Jews could not have found a more favorable climate.

In 1915, as World War I raged, he sent a laconic telegram: "Since the beginning of the war, Russian Jews have not had to submit to any collective violence. . . . In the zone of operations a few hundred Jews have been hanged for espionage: nothing more."

The Catholic Factor

IN THE late 19th century, the French built up their position simultaneously in North Africa and in the Ottoman provinces comprising Syria, Lebanon, and the Holy Land. In the latter case, the process was slow and piecemeal, often promoted by pious and wealthy individuals. Comte Paul de Piellat, for instance, settled in Jerusalem, purchasing real estate and bequeathing it to the Catholic Church. The French had hospitals in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Nablus, as well as monasteries and seminaries and several churches; they also owned and operated the Jerusalem-Jaffa railway.

In 1888 the Vatican decreed that Catholics and Catholic institutions in the Levant should henceforth look for protection exclusively to France. Prime Minister Jules Ferry, most imperial of French politicians, held that "this protectorate of Christians in the Orient is in some sense part of our Mediterranean domain." Aspiring to counteract the British, who were then consolidating their hold on Egypt, Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux believed that, through its Catholic protectorate, France was now the only European power "capable of acting without fatal contention but side by side with Muslim monotheism."

Treaties in 1901 with the Turkish sultan and in 1913 with the Young Turks protected France's privileged position in the Holy Land, then still under Ottoman dominion. A *Comité de l'Asie Française* was founded in 1901; eight years later, a second committee was formed to develop "our moral, economic, and political standing in the Orient." These appeared to be building blocks toward the goal of becoming a true "*puissance musulmane*."

The anti-clericalism of the French Left, and France's eventual break with the Vatican, cut right across any such sweeping Catholic ambitions. Soon, too, Germany, Italy, and Russia would challenge France's position, expanding the institutions belonging to their own respective religions. Kaiser

Wilhelm's visit to the Holy Land in 1898 represented one such open challenge.

Zionism vs. French Ambitions

THE RISE of political Zionism promised to bestow a modern national identity on the Jews, one that would altogether overturn the French state's preferred definition of who they were. French diplomats in central and eastern Europe, where the most ardent Zionists could be found, were quick to register dismay and to search for the causes, open or occult, of this disturbing new development. Writing from Bucharest in June 1902, L. Descoy regretted the "extreme enthusiasm" of that city's Jewish community at the arrival of Bernard Lazare, a gifted French Jewish polemicist and early Zionist, suggesting that it had been whipped up by a newspaper "whose leading editors are Israelites." In Budapest, Vicomte de Fontenay, in charge of the consulate, reported in August 1906 that, for the Magyar population, the advent of Zionism was "a new cloud" on the horizon, one likely to grow "worse with time." In February 1912, Max Chouttier, consul in Salonika, relayed warnings against Zionism in the official local press, expressing the hope that these warnings would "give the Jewish communities pause for thought and encourage them to oppose Germano-Zionist propaganda."

G. Deville, minister in Athens, commented adversely on the role in Salonika of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the school system set up by French Jews to promote Jewish education and culture in the Middle East. To Deville, the Alliance was screening its true ambitions; its Parisian director "might be a good Frenchman, but those of his religion in Salonika think only of serving themselves and not of serving France. . . . In these circumstances, is it to our benefit to upset the Greeks in order to flatter Jewish pride?" In *Le Mirage Oriental* (1910), Louis Bertrand, another polished writer-diplomat, wrote of the "displeasing" Jews he had met in Ottoman Palestine, with "their hybrid clothes, half European, half Oriental, dirty, with glowering looks . . . hordes crazed with poverty and mysticism."

In the Holy Land itself, Zionism had implications far greater than it did in Europe: by definition, it represented a rival to French expansionism and France's Catholic protectorate. The spontaneous reaction was twofold—to heap contempt on Jewish nationalism and to sponsor Arab nationalism in opposition to it.

Najib Azoury, a Maronite Christian from Beirut who had once been employed in the Ottoman bureaucracy in Jerusalem but now lived in Paris, published a booklet, *Le Réveil de la nation arabe*, predicting that Jews and Arabs were destined to fight until one eliminated the other. The Quai d'Orsay apparently subsidized a journal, *L'Indépendance arabe*, that this unsavory character began to put out in 1907, and paid for a meeting in Paris in June 1913 at which 23 Arabs from Syria and the Holy Land effectively launched the Arab nationalist movement.

AFTER WORLD WAR I, two highly restricted groups of specialists in the Quai d'Orsay handled the redrawing of the map of the Middle East in the wake of the demise of the Ottoman empire. The personnel overlapped, and were of a single mind: France already controlled the Arab western shores of the Mediterranean, and now could add the eastern ones, what these experts referred to as *la Syrie intégrale* or Greater Syria (that is, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine). The question before them was how to turn both Arab nationalism and Zionism to their purposes.

The background was as follows. François Georges-Picot had been counselor at the wartime French embassy in London. In secret negotiations in 1916 with Sir Mark Sykes, a Conservative member of Parliament, he reached what he believed was an agreement granting France possession of *la Syrie intégrale* after the war. The Germans, it was suspected, were about to issue a proclamation of support for Zionism, and this could swing Russian Jews to their side, with ominous consequences for the outcome of the war; American Jews were thought to exercise a comparable influence on their country's policy. Therefore, according to André Tardieu, the French high commissioner in the U.S. and a future prime minister, the right of Jews to self-determination should be taken into consideration, lest "certain elements in American Jewry" lose interest in helping to recover Alsace and Lorraine for France.

Others similarly saw the Jews as holding France's postwar fate in their hands. On May 7, 1917 Jean Gout, head of the Asian section of the foreign ministry with responsibility for the Ottoman provinces, sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau:

The millenarian hopes of the Jews, especially the proletarians of Poland and Russia, are not socialistic as their social standing might suggest, nor national as the declarations of their

intellectuals pretend, but they are essentially talmudic, that is to say religious. These poor devils have been nurtured on myths of misery which gives them a glimpse of Jerusalem as the end of their ills. . . . Even intelligent and educated Jews who have come to the top in countries with equal opportunities cherish for generations in a corner of their heart the dream of the old ghettos. Thanks to their wealth and the links they preserve among themselves, and the pressure they exert on ignorant governments, they represent an international weight.

An earlier proposal, to help create a small autonomous Jewish state with Hebron as its capital and Gaza as its port, had prompted Jules Cambon to comment bitinglly that the Jews there could "grow oranges and exploit each other." But since the powers were all bidding for Jewish favor, the French could, too; in June 1917, Cambon wrote a letter assuring the Zionist leadership of French support "in the renaissance of the Jewish nationality in that land from which the people of Israel were exiled so long ago." This letter was no sooner sent than regretted, as the Quai d'Orsay rapidly returned to circulating anti-Zionist memoranda and bombarding the British with demands to abstain from any action that might raise unrealizable Jewish hopes.

That November, Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary, issued the declaration bearing his name. It was far more supportive of Zionism than Cambon's letter. The British government, Balfour wrote, was in favor of "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. With 150,000 soldiers fighting the Turks to France's 800, the British were able to propose and dispose. On Christmas day 1917, Field Marshal Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem with Georges-Picot in his entourage. At a picnic, the latter suggested setting up the civil administration he thought he had negotiated with Sykes. Also present was Lawrence of Arabia, and his description of Allenby's scornful response is one of the more famous passages in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

In December, a French diplomat in the embassy in London reported that, although wealthy English Jews were hostile to the Balfour Declaration, the enthusiastic view of poor and immigrant Jews was that "the Israelite race was superior to all others; it possessed colonies in all the countries and one day it shall dominate the world." An unsigned position paper from around the same time suggested that Zionists, who drew their strength from the mysticism of Russian-Polish Jewry, were trying to spread their nefarious ideas to Jews in Algeria and Moroc-

co, thereby seeking "to exploit great-power rivalry." The author had some classic advice: "Our Jewish policy in North Africa is necessarily linked to our Muslim policy. We have to avoid Jewish nationalism, as also pan-Islamism or pan-Arabism, by favoring a slow and careful evolution in the direction of our *civilisation*."

On January 15, 1919, Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon instructed Paul Cambon to alert the British government to the Zionist danger, lest it become a cause for international trouble in the Middle East. "The Zionists must understand once and for all that there can be no question of constituting an independent Jewish state in Palestine, or even forming some sovereign Jewish body." Three days later Cambon reported back. He could hardly believe the conversation he had just had with Balfour. In his usual dilettantish manner (Cambon wrote), Balfour had said that "it would be interesting to be present at the reconstitution of the [ancient] Kingdom of Jerusalem." When Cambon protested that, according to the New Testament book of Revelation, such an event would signal the end of the world, Balfour rejoined: "It would be still more interesting to be present at the end of the world."

Between the Wars

THE POSTWAR treaty of peace signed at Sèvres settled the disposition of the former Ottoman provinces. France was to have a mandate for Syria, but not for Greater Syria: Palestine would be incorporated into a British mandate. Since the British at least were Christian (where the Ottomans had been Muslim), France duly renounced the letter of its Catholic protectorate. But not the spirit: as a Catholic paper, *L'Oeuvre d'Orient*, editorialized, "It is inadmissible that the 'Country of Christ' should become the prey of Jewry and of Anglo-Saxon heresy. It must remain the inviolable inheritance of France and the Church." The Quai d'Orsay never ceased to play one side off against the other, at every level.

In October 1919, General Henri Gouraud arrived in Damascus to take up his appointment as French high commissioner and to scatter the minuscule number of Arab nationalists who sought to resist the French mandate. Meanwhile, Georges-Picot was alerting the Quai d'Orsay that British authorities in Jerusalem were finally becoming aware of growing Muslim restiveness, something that "could only be to the profit of our influence." During the first six months of 1920, Gouraud bombarded his superiors with anti-Zionist tele-

grams. Both Muslims and Christians, he wrote, were expecting conditions in Palestine to be worse under the British than under the Turks. Suggesting the need for a renewed Catholic protectorate, he thought the French "should take advantage of circumstances to enlarge the scope of this protectorate to include the Muslims whom we cannot leave alone and unarmed to face Zionism." A February 1920 dispatch states outright that Palestine would benefit from the guardianship of France.

Since the exact boundary between the French and British mandates remained uncertain, Gouraud's personal secretary, Robert de Caix, was dispatched to Jerusalem to discuss the issue with Sir Herbert Samuel, the British high commissioner. One historian, Peter A. Shambrook, has described de Caix as "the *eminence grise* at the Quai d'Orsay on the Levant question." In a preliminary letter dated October 19, 1920, de Caix confirmed what was already political orthodoxy in his circle: the British and the Jews were conspiring together against French interests. From the outset he felt personally slighted because he had been "received in a rather mediocre way," Samuel, he explained,

represents in Palestine what it is appropriate to call Anglo-Jewish policy. This well-mannered English Jew, scraped clean of the ghetto, has been completely taken up in Jerusalem by his tribe, and he attends synagogue, accepts no invitations on the Sabbath, and on holy days goes only on foot. It is a strange phenomenon when one reflects on the evident ignominy of Jews from Galicia and other surrounding regions who are now flooding Palestine but who draft people like Sir Herbert into their buffoonery. Before doing anything worthwhile in the country, these people dream of spreading at our expense, and you may be sure that the complete Jewry of both hemispheres will apply a policy consisting of rejecting our frontier.

In a lengthy final report, de Caix mentioned another personal insult: Samuel had declined an invitation to dine at the French consulate on the Sabbath. British policy, de Caix elaborated, may have been intended to exploit Jewish strength against France, but was in fact being exploited by it. Jews had infiltrated the local administration, and British officials were either lying low or leaving the country in disgust. As for the Jews, their religion was only a means to an end—"passionate nationalism and a thirst for revenge." They would prove, he continued, harmful neighbors:

The frequent revolutionary and prophetic spir-

it of the Jews derives from the Bolshevism of the colonists whom Eastern Europe is sending to Palestine. Through conviction, and also through their instinctive tendency to fragment societies whose cohesion might stand in the way of their expansion, these people will . . . try to break the traditional framework of religious confessions [in Lebanon and Syria] that are already threatened for other reasons.

British rule in Palestine, de Caix concluded, amounted to a kind of despoiling. It had been allowed to occur only because the French had sacrificed themselves for the Allied cause on the Western front. But the French language and French intellectual influence were and ought to have remained paramount in the Holy Land. After all, the principal door of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed "in the solid and massive ogival style born in the 12th century in the Ile de France." He ended with the consoling thought that the future of Zionism remained doubtful: more than any other people, the Jews had lost the habit of agriculture, and their settlement of the land was artificial, expensive, and divisive. "If under the British mandate the native [Arab] peoples have a tendency to react, there is every chance that they will try to maintain, as indeed they do in Egypt, the French culture, which retains such attraction."

On November 3, General Gouraud seconded the conclusions of de Caix's "remarkable report," adding his opinion that Zionism was a threat to Syria as well. The loss of the Catholic protectorate made the care of French institutions more essential than ever. Twelve days later, Georges-Picot in a telegram from Beirut informed the ministry that British authorities in Jerusalem were taking precautions against riots and warning Muslims that they would be held responsible for any disorder. "This [British] attitude can only benefit our influence, as irritation with Zionism is only growing among . . . Muslims." French consuls in mandatory Palestine became increasingly alarmist: Durieux in Haifa reported that the British were recruiting unemployed Jews as the core of a future Jewish army, and that Jewish and Protestant elements were attempting to cut the ground out from under the Catholics (that is, France). In May 1921, after riots in Jaffa, Durieux could at least write in relief that "our car was borne in triumph by the population crying 'long live France, down with the Jews.'"

DE CAIX's interpretation of Zionism would have a lasting impact at the Quai d'Orsay. From the French protectorate of Morocco, Mar-

shal Hubert Lyautey, perhaps the most respected spokesman for old-style French imperialism, reiterated in June 1923 that Zionism lacked any internal authenticity; at the same time, he advised extreme caution lest this doctrine, which had "received its directives from abroad, [and] served principally the interests of a determined power," be imported into Morocco.

Seeking to show who the Jews really were, an unsigned report dated December 2, 1925 drew attention to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Although this work, purporting to show evidence of a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world, had already by then been exposed as a czarist forgery, the author gives credence to its "facts" and concludes that, if the matter is to be taken seriously, "we have to deal with a really diabolical plan." That same year, the French ambassador in Warsaw reported that a local Zionist conference constituted an appeal for special privileges by Jews unwilling to accept any idea of Polish nationality, or even of simple loyalty. Covering another Zionist congress in Cracow ten years later, the succeeding ambassador to Poland adapted this same critique to the changing tenor of the times: "Basing themselves on conceptions that are more racial than religious, they aspire to set up on both banks of the Jordan a Jewish state conceived on the fascist model." This ambassador appears to have been among the first to draw a comparison between Zionism and Nazism, likening the Revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky to Hitler.

To be sure, one does find an occasional official disposed to a favorable view of Zionism, usually on the basis of first-hand experience. One such was Henry de Jouvenel, Gouraud's successor as high commissioner in Syria. He visited Jerusalem in 1926 and later wrote: "Anti-Zionist when I arrived in the East, I became Zionist, or rather jealous of the British high commissioner in Palestine and all that the Zionists contribute." Naturally, he added, France was obliged to support Christians, but the Jews were models of self-help, and their spirit of enterprise was admirable.

There were also realists like Philippe Berthelot, secretary general from 1920 to 1933, who commented that "Zionism is a fact" and regretted only that the Jews of England had understood the point of the movement while French Jews had proved unable to take "the lead of world Jewry to the benefit of France." At Berthelot's instigation, the Quai d'Orsay set up a special department for religious affairs under Louis Canet, which soon became, in the words of one historian, an obligatory antechamber for visiting Zionist leaders. After a

meeting with Chaim Weizmann in May 1927, Canet concluded a memorandum with a clear expression of his own inner thoughts: "Jewish nationalism is a mistake and Israel [i.e., Jews] can find peace only through assimilation."

THROUGHOUT THE interwar period, many of the Quai d'Orsay's leading lights were extremely capable men. Yet they and the politicians whom they served sought the shelter of the status quo, even though this meant appeasing the powerful and the vicious at the expense of the weak. All of a kind, they were conditioned to the task by background and temperament. Nor were their ranks enlarged or made more diverse. Candidates groomed in the select higher schools were examined in history, international and civil law, and economic geography, then vetted by a committee of four senior diplomats to ensure that they were socially and culturally presentable.

Here, in short, was a prime example of a French institution unable to take the measure of the age of the dictators. As the Nazi threat grew, and as Jews tried to escape from Europe to Palestine, French authorities feared violence in Muslim countries under French rule. And so, from March 1933 on, Jewish "travelers" were allowed to enter Syria only on condition that they had obtained immigration visas to Palestine from a British consulate abroad. Henri Gaillard, consul in Cairo, condemned the Jews of Egypt for "complaining without limit about the fate of those [in Europe] who share their religion." In doing so, he grumbled, "they have succeeded in creating a strong current of Arab opinion against themselves in this country, where until now their position was completely privileged." Gaston Bernard, consul in Trieste, reporting that his city was profiting from the traffic of Jewish emigrants on their way to Palestine, complained nevertheless that, on Lloyd Triestino steamships, "care has been carried to the extreme of ensuring that the emigrants have services of the talmudic cult and the exclusive use of kosher cuisine: and this, it has to be said, communicates a *sui generis* odor to these ships which customers of a normal composition no doubt appreciate less highly."

In the immediate aftermath of Hitler's invasion of Austria in March 1938, the United States invited 28 European and Latin American governments to a conference at Evian to discuss how to facilitate the emigration of political refugees. By tacit agreement, and ostensibly for fear of stoking anti-Semitism, there was no open reference to Jews. Nothing of substance was agreed upon at the confer-

ence, which has been called "the Jewish Munich." In the judgment of one authority, the historian Catherine Nicault, "the absolute lack of generosity in French policy was less striking [at Evian] than the indifference toward even keeping up any appearance of it"; she also notes outright and frequent anti-Semitic pronouncements on the part of French officials.

After the collapse of France in June 1940, Marshal Pétain agreed to an armistice with Hitler and then formed his Vichy government with the intention of collaborating with Nazi Germany. That October, without any prompting from Berlin, Vichy passed the *Statut des Juifs*, its version of Germany's Nuremberg laws, excluding Jews from whole areas of public life. Jacques Guérard, director of the office of Foreign Minister Paul Baudoin, telegraphed the French ambassador in Washington with instructions for allaying any disquiet in American public opinion. The prewar Left, he asserted in contravention of the facts, had allowed Jews to enter France in the hundreds of thousands, and these Jews, with "their special mentality," had attacked "all the ideas from which the French had never wavered." Again in contravention of the facts, since dispossession and arrest were already the order of the day, Guérard stated flagrantly that "no measure has been taken against individuals or property." The sole purpose of the statute, he concluded, was "to allow the peaceful existence in France of elements whose racial characteristics make them dangerous when they mix too intimately with our political and administrative life."

Collaboration with the Nazis was incompatible with any genuine foreign policy. Ambassadors in important capitals resigned, as did officials in the Vichy zone, some escaping into Spain and then onward to Algiers or London. A list of personnel at the Quai d'Orsay in February 1943 names the secretary general, Charles Rochat, along with a tiny handful of men under him. Asked later why he himself did not resign, Rochat answered that he was maintaining "the continuous affirmation of French sovereignty." This was of course illusory: the Quai d'Orsay had virtually ceased to function.

Writers Take Sides

IN HIS years as secretary general (1920-21, 1925-32), Philippe Berthelot set a special tone to which many of those who served with him would pay tribute in print. The son of a celebrated industrial chemist, Berthelot had supreme self-confidence and dedication, wide social connections,

and genuine literary tastes. His wife, Hélène, conducted a fashionable salon. Under his sponsorship and protection, Paul Morand, Paul Claudel, Jean Giraudoux, and other writers employed at the Quai d'Orsay were given time and a sense of security, enabling them to build international literary reputations. It was as if they were members of an elite club rather than an institution of government. Berthelot's successor as secretary general, Alexis Saint-Léger, an elusive personality from the French West Indies, was a poet who under the pseudonym of Saint-John Perse would win the Nobel Prize. Taken together, these men perpetuated the image of the Quai d'Orsay as the repository of culture and brilliance.

Paul Morand grew up in an artistic milieu. He entered the Quai d'Orsay in 1913 at the age of twenty-five. Among his early writings was *Mort d'un Juif* ("Death of a Jew"), a short story in which a Jew on his death bed refuses to pay his doctor until the rate of exchange has improved. In a second piece of fiction, *Mort d'un autre Juif* ("Death of Another Jew"), the mortally wounded victim of a pogrom feels that he has been "faithful to the truth under the mask of eternal treason." Alexis Saint-Léger wrote to Morand, "You have a prodigious gift." Berthelot expected great things of him.

Morand used his status as a diplomat to travel in style all over the world. In 1927 he married the divorced wife of Prince Dimitry Soutzo, the Romanian military attaché in Paris, and the couple settled smoothly into the beau monde. His many books display a cosmopolitan superiority verging on flippancy, and resorting time and again to malicious descriptions of Jews. In *New York* (1930), for example, he writes of Jewish intellectuals as "preachers, self-immolators, socialists, anarchists, Bolsheviks, Communists, and others 'ists' perpetually quarrelling and cursing each other," altogether "giving a rather exact idea of what Jerusalem must have been." The Lower East Side prompts this reaction: "Grilled and salted almonds are sold by peddlers whose frozen hooked noses stick out of moth-eaten fur caps brought over from Russia by their ancestors." Morand claimed that his novel *France La Douce* ("Sweet France," 1934) was satire; although he was no Céline calling outright for the massacre of Jews, the book, whose theme is that Jews control the movie industry and that their sole objective is money-grubbing and the debauchery of public taste, has a central place in the anti-Semitic literature of the period.

In 1940 Morand was in London at the head of an economic warfare mission. Like all but a hand-

ful of the 800 French officials in Britain at the collapse of France, he rejected Charles de Gaulle's appeal to join the Free French and instead returned home. In Vichy he was made president of the Commission for Film Censorship. In 1943, Morand took up an appointment as French ambassador in Bucharest, and for a few weeks before the end of Vichy served as ambassador in Berne, where he and his wife judged it prudent to remain as long as there was any chance of recrimination at home. In 1958, de Gaulle, then president of France, vetoed Morand's election to the Académie Française, only to consent to it ten years later. By then such reversals had become standard practice in France, in this case serving to sugarcoat Morand's embrace of fascism as just another aspect of his inveterate dandyism.

Jean Giraudoux was among Morand's closest friends and colleagues. He knew England and America well, and spoke English fluently. An aesthete, he wrote in a style elegant and subtle, suffused with irony. He too littered his work with aspersions against the Jews. In an autobiographical book published in 1939, he stated that "we are in complete agreement with Hitler in proclaiming that [national] policy attains its superior form only when it is racial." As for Jews, he had been taken to meet a family from Eastern Europe and found them "black and inert, like leeches in a jar." "The Jews," he wrote, "sully, corrupt, rot, corrode, debase, devalue everything they touch." On the eve of war, he was appointed to run the Commission for Information, supposedly as a counter to the propaganda ministry run by Goebbels in Nazi Germany but in fact complementing the latter's racial opinions. In Paris throughout the occupation, Giraudoux mingled socially with German officials and collaborators; a play of his was staged there in 1943. His death early the following year saved him from being brought to account.

PAUL CLAUDEL (1868-1955) combined a diplomatic career with the pursuit of literature. A high Catholic and a political conservative, very much a man of the world, he seemed a contemporary standard-bearer of the values and tradition of pre-Revolutionary France. Saint Louis and Joan of Arc, whom he constantly invoked, were living symbols for him. When W.H. Auden wrote that "time . . . will pardon Paul Claudel, / Pardons him for writing well," he was expressing the view of his generation that in spite of his obvious limitations, Claudel was a literary star of the first rank, a French Yeats or Eliot.

Claudé's father and sister, he later acknowledged, had been admirers of the notorious anti-Semitic polemicist Edouard Drumont, and during the Dreyfus affair he himself had not been "on the right side." His first foreign posting, in 1893, was as French consul in New York. Soon afterward he was sent for six years to China. As late as 1910, by which time Dreyfus had been rehabilitated, Claudel was writing to his fellow Catholic Charles Péguy, a militant for the faith but a Dreyfusard, "I have difficulty understanding how you can deny the role of Jewry in this affair. I have lived in all the countries of the world, and everywhere I have seen the newspapers and public opinion in the hands of the Jews. I was in Jerusalem in December 1899 and at the moment of the second condemnation [of Dreyfus] I saw the rage of those lice with a human face who live in Palestine on the *razzias* [desert raids] which their kith and kin operate against Christianity."

In the early years of the 20th century, Claudel began portraying Jewish characters for literary effect. Ali Habenichts and Sichel are the names he gives to a Jewish father and daughter in a trilogy of plays. Money-making, the drive to assimilate, and the absence of any patriotism are their distinguishing traits. Claudel has Sichel say: "For us Jews, there's no little scrap of earth so large as a gold coin."

In the 20's Claudel was ambassador in Tokyo and then Washington (where he received Morand). But his outlook seems to have evolved somewhat when one of his sons married the daughter of Paul-Louis Weiller, a prominent French Jew who was the managing director of a leading manufacturer of aircraft engines. In 1935, Weiller appointed Claudel to the board of this company, paying him a large salary; perhaps fortuitously, Claudel then wrote an open letter to the World Jewish Congress objecting to the Nuremberg race laws as "abominable and stupid legislation directed against those of your religion in Germany."

Apparently his new mood was variable. The demise of the Third Republic's parliamentary regime in June 1940 enthused Claudel. After 60 years, he wrote in his diary, France had finally been delivered "from the yoke of the radical and anti-clerical party (professors, lawyers, Jews, freemasons)." The replacement of democracy by an authoritarian system based on Catholic values had long been his ideal. He knew Marshal Pétain, who had voted for his election to the Academy in 1935. On the other hand, he disapproved of unqualified collaboration with Germany as was rec-

commended by some Catholics. Already in his early seventies by now, Claudel retired to his country house in the non-occupied zone.

On October 6, 1940, Paul-Louis Weiller was arrested on trumped-up charges. Claudel went to Vichy to intercede for him, but to no effect. Soon afterward, Weiller's French citizenship was revoked, and his property was confiscated; released from prison, he managed to escape to New York. On December 27, Claudel published an ode to Pétain, presenting him as the national savior and an almost saintly figure. To an interviewer after the war, he would explain his enthusiasm for Pétain with the phrase, "He took me in."

Be that as it may, on December 24, 1941, Claudel wrote to the chief rabbi of France, expressing "the disgust, horror, and indignation that all decent Frenchmen and especially Catholics feel in respect of the injustices, the despoiling, all the ill treatment of which our Jewish compatriots are now the victims." Catholics, he concluded, could never forget that "Israel is always the eldest son of the promise [of God], as it is today the eldest son of suffering." The rank of "*Ambassadeur de France*" after his signature added to this act of civil courage. When the letter was published, the Vichy authorities, who suspected Claudel of having facilitated Weiller's flight abroad, duly searched his house and kept him under observation. In September 1944, in keeping with the twists and turns of that tormented period, Claudel published an ode to de Gaulle, as embarrassing in its high-flown obsequiousness as his earlier ode to Pétain.

Claudel was one of the earliest to understand that the Holocaust was an event like no other, a stain forever on Christian Europe. But he also thought there might be something "providential" about it, a "redeeming effectiveness." For the remainder of his life, he pondered in his visionary manner on "the mystery of Israel" and its "vocation." His support of the state of Israel was genuine, however, and marked a complete reversal of the animus against "lice with a human face" that had once possessed him. Still, the place of the Jews in the modern world remained, for him, in question. Jews were a people apart but also "ecumenical," possessors of the Holy Land not through any historic link or right but as ambassadors of humanity, with "a message addressed to man as he emerged pure from the hands of his Creator." Even for someone trying sincerely to come to grips with the meaning of the events of his time, Jews were evidently not to be seen as

human beings like any other but as agents of other purposes, now lower, now higher.

The Rescue of the Mufti

"**W**E HATE France—it is the enemy of Islam and religion because it is governed by atheists and Jews." Thus spoke one Arab nationalist propagandist among many on Mussolini's Radio Rome in 1938. Along similar lines, a tract distributed throughout North Africa contained the words: "The Jew feeds on you [Arabs] as vermin feed on sheep; France protects him; he is the agent of France, the tool of France. Germany is arresting and persecuting Jews and confiscating their possessions. If you weren't the slaves of France, you could do the same."

The collapse of France in 1940 and its subsequent occupation by Germany exhausted the country's moral and political authority as an imperial power. Although, as leader of the Free French, General de Gaulle would make a speech promising independence to French colonies and mandates in the Middle East, this was a promise he evidently had no intention of keeping any time soon. Nevertheless, Arab nationalists in North Africa and the Levant saw themselves as having been invited to rebel and seize power.

On May 8, 1945, the day marking Allied victory in Europe, Algerians rioted in the provincial town of Setif. Over 100 French people were killed, and as many injured. In the reprisals that followed, at least 6,000 Algerians died. At the same time, law and order broke down in Syria and Lebanon. Over 400 Syrians were killed, and the parliament in Damascus was destroyed. British forces temporarily stationed in Syria and Lebanon as a result of the war ordered the much weaker French units back to their barracks, in effect negating French rule and handing independence to both countries. In the National Assembly, the French foreign minister Georges Bidault warned the British with a Latin tag: "*Hodie mihi, cras tibi*"—today me, tomorrow you.

That same May, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the notorious mufti of Jerusalem, along with his staff of some sixteen aides and the officer assigned to him by the Nazi Gestapo, left what had been German-occupied Silesia and fled to Switzerland. Denied asylum there, he and his entourage found themselves in the hands of the French authorities.

Haj Amin had been responsible for rejecting any notion of partitioning Palestine between Arabs and Jews, and for precipitating the Arab re-

volt of 1936 in which many British personnel as well as Jews and Arabs had been killed. With French connivance, he had escaped in 1938 to Lebanon, going on to participate in the 1941 anti-British coup in Iraq before finally fleeing to Berlin. Wartime photographs show him in his clerical robes and turban in the company of Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler, and Eichmann, both privately and at public occasions, including a tour of Auschwitz. After the Allies invaded North Africa in November 1942 and the Germans took over Vichy France, Haj Amin urged Hitler to exploit the local populations of both places in order to break "the Judeo-Anglo-Saxon stranglehold." He also recruited a Bosnian Muslim division for the SS, an act for which the Americans, the British, and the Yugoslavs wanted him extradited as a war criminal.

On May 11, 1945, the ministry of the interior briefed the Quai d'Orsay that Haj Amin was considered "the brains of German espionage in all Muslim countries." The next day, the French embassy in Cairo confirmed what was to become policy. "The mufti has certainly betrayed the Allied cause," the telegram ran. "But he has above all betrayed Britain without affecting us directly. Seemingly, therefore, nothing obliges us to undertake any action in his regard that could harm us in the Arab countries." The main point was that Haj Amin held the future of Palestine in his hands at a time when "the problem of Palestine remains open."

On May 18, in a note marked "Urgent," Jean Chauvel, now secretary general of the Quai d'Orsay, confirmed to the minister of war that Haj Amin was "capable of imposing himself on the Muslim community." By May 23 Chauvel had informed the relevant embassies that "in spite of the very heavy accusations weighing against him, Haj Amin is to be treated with consideration." The reason given was his "religious prestige." An unsigned note of May 30, apparently in Chauvel's handwriting, asserts that "at the moment when [British] policy . . . is tending to throw us completely out of Syria, we must make use of the strong personality who has fallen into our hands and above all refuse to deliver him to our English friends."

HAJ AMIN was housed in a villa in the Paris suburbs. With him were two secretaries and a cook supplied by the Paris mosque. The Quai d'Orsay's go-between, Henri Ponsot, a former high commissioner and ambassador in Syria, was impressed by the mufti's "certain air of dignity and aristocratic grace," as well as by his intellect and his

correct French. As for war crimes, Haj Amin claimed that he knew nothing about extermination camps and had never heard of "Karl Hichman" (Ponsot's garbled version of Adolf Eichmann). Approvingly, Ponsot passed on Haj Amin's view that, since Britain was unable "to break loose from the influence that the Jewish world exercised on its politics," France and the Arab states should come to an accord to settle the future of both Syria and Palestine. What Haj Amin offered, Ponsot reported on June 26, was either a "positive" collaboration, in return for which he promised to calm the general Arab agitation concerning Syria, or, almost as good, a "negative" collaboration, in which case he would provoke crises in Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, and Transjordan "to the benefit of our own policy." (These words of Ponsot's are lightly scratched out on the document.)

At the end of July, Haj Amin was moved into a comfortable country house where he could receive visitors, walk in the park under supervision, and visit Paris, where the couturier Lanvin cut him a civilian suit. The documents hint at financial and material help in an atmosphere of growing goodwill. Reporting on August 14 to the Quai d'Orsay on a visit to the mufti, Louis Massignon, France's most distinguished Orientalist scholar, could not resist confiding that they had spoken Arabic together and that he had addressed the mufti as "*za'imnaa*," our leader. Haj Amin, Massignon wrote, "is persuaded that he can launch a durable Franco-Arab cooperation," and had asked permission to meet Arab diplomats since "time was pressing, if the Zionists attack."

Already there was talk in the ministry of letting Haj Amin go free. Should the British insist on having him brought to trial, Chauvel commented in October, "we should probably be obliged to have the party slip directly into Switzerland." In April 1946, the French press published an officially inspired announcement that the government would not prevent Haj Amin's departure to an Arab country. Taking the hint, he left Orly airport on a TWA flight to Cairo. Under the name of a retainer who had been with him in Nazi Germany, and wearing his new Lanvin suit, he traveled on a false Syrian passport. Once in Cairo he held regular interviews with members of the French legation there, who praised his "quite particular interest in French cultural activity" while also expressing certain reservations about his trustworthiness.

On October 11, Haj Amin declared his official thanks to the French government for its hospitality and its tacit approval of his escape. In a secret

annex, he reiterated a favorite theme: the British and American governments were in the hands of the Jews, just as had been the case in Germany, "where, thanks to the natural simplicity of the leaders, the Jews prior to Hitler had taken hold of all the commanding reins." Now, he told the French, there was a chance for "your civilization, your spirituality, and your liberalism" to bring about an accord with the Arabs.

From Cairo, Haj Amin went to Lebanon. Still in touch with French officials, he did his best to orchestrate his "negative" policy of violence against the emerging state of Israel, a policy that extended the ruin of the Palestinian Arabs and has bedeviled the Middle East ever since.

Louis Massignon

FOR HIS contemporaries, Louis Massignon revitalized the belief that France was indeed a "Muslim power"—and that the duty of Jews was to accommodate themselves to other peoples' conceptions of them. Born in 1883, Massignon was a particularly brilliant misfit, a fabulist with a personality strong enough to persuade interlocutors that the quirks of his imagination corresponded to the movements of the real world. He spread mystification right through the Quai d'Orsay, to lasting effect.

In Cairo and Baghdad before World War I, Massignon learned the languages of the Middle East and initiated the research that led to a professorship at the Collège de France and a growing reputation as an Orientalist. The special object of his study as a scholar was Mansur al-Hallaj, a medieval Shiite mystic tortured to death as a heretic in Baghdad in 922. A Spanish friend, Luis de Cuadra, introduced him to the homosexual debauchery of Cairo. Soon afterward, consumed by remorse, he had a religious epiphany, a vision of what he called "the divine fire." He believed that he, too, had a religious vocation, one that would be accompanied by martyrdom as suffered by both Jesus and al-Hallaj.

Marriage hardly interfered with Massignon's incessant travels or his work. Paul Claudel, a long-standing friend and a witness at Massignon's wedding, wrote to him from Prague on February 8, 1911, "You would make an incomparable agent. I have dropped the word to my friend Berthelot, to whom I must introduce you one day." Although the Massignon files in the Quai d'Orsay remain closed, enough is in the public domain to show that he indeed acted as some sort of roving ambassador, engaging in secret and confidential work. Loosely

identified as the head of a "scientific mission," he traveled on a diplomatic passport. Algeria, Morocco, and Syria were among his special areas of concern, and in one of his books he would admit to "sailing under false colors in Damascus from 1920 to 1945."

In 1917, as a member of the Georges-Picot mission, Massignon was present when the British captured and entered Jerusalem. So, we have seen, was T.E. Lawrence. Speaking to one another in Arabic, they were two of a kind; just as Lawrence always suspected the worst of the French, so Massignon always suspected the worst of the British.

For Massignon as for Claudel, Jews were a theological "mystery," conducting their private dialogue with God to the imagined ultimate benefit of Christianity. He took his time deciding how Zionism fit or failed to fit into his Catholic scheme of things. Work on the land might be redemptive for a few proletarian Jews, but in the background, he warned as early as 1920, was "the horrible Israel of cosmopolitans, bankers with no country of their own who have exploited Anglo-Saxon imperialism, . . . eating you down to the bone." Visiting Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in 1934 he detected "powerful financial interventions" that alone enabled Zionism to survive. The conviction hardened in him that only "a Franco-Islamic bloc" could save the Holy Land, indeed the whole Middle East.

In a 1939 article, Massignon deplored how "Germanized Ashkenazim have taken the Palestinian issue into their hands, with the perfect and implacable technique of the most exasperating of colonialisms: slowly pushing the Arab 'natives' toward the desert." At the outbreak of war he served under Giraudoux, directing propaganda to Muslim countries. His state of mind at the time is revealed in a remark he made to a devoted pupil who had converted to Islam: "My country is the Arab world." In the same spirit he had once written to Claudel, "It is in Arabic no doubt that [God] is pleased that I should one day serve Him." Out of mortification, he fasted during Ramadan.

After the war, Massignon campaigned with passionate fury against the creation of the state of Israel. Any agreement struck with Zionists was intrinsically wrong—the Jewish national home was "an imposture in which we should not be accomplices"—and would serve only to "convulse our North Africa." Not really a nation, Jewry "signifies nothing unless it lives through spirituality, and if this spirituality is exclusive, as it is trying to ensure against the Muslim Arabs, it will be a catastrophe." He founded a committee to help lobby for the

cause, and above all for retaining the holy places in French-Catholic hands. In an extended polemic in print, he maintained that the infamous blood libel accusing the Jews of needing Christian blood for their rites had an authentic historical basis.

The United Nations vote in November 1947 in favor of partition—in which the Quai d'Orsay concurred—appalled Massignon. His frequent articles in Catholic publications like *Témoignage Chrétien* and *L'Aube* became infused with religiosity and political hysteria. According to him, Christian or Muslim recognition of Israel had no value in law. The “State-without-a-Messiah of Israel” had been formed at the expense of the Arabs, who were “victims of repulsive Yankee technology.” Obsessed with the Virgin Mary, he insisted that “the world will never know a just peace until Israel [i.e., Jews] reconsiders its rejection of the mother of Jesus.” Visiting the state of Israel in February 1949, he felt his “heart pierced by the ignominiousness of the Jews.” An angry Claudel broke off a lifetime's friendship, noting in his diary that Massignon “has gone off the rails as usual.”

In 1950, in Cairo, the city where he had discovered his homosexuality, Massignon took holy orders as a priest in the eastern Melkite church. After his death in 1963, many a Quai d'Orsay colleague would lament the loss of a genius. Then and ever since, Massignon's learning and showmanship have served to reinforce the Quai d'Orsay in its collective predisposition in favor of Arabs and in its view that it is better equipped to define Jews, and to ordain their path, than are Jews themselves.

“A Pernicious Example and a Great Peril”

NOMINALLY A victor in World War II, France was in reality more like one of the defeated. Its standing in the world had to be rebuilt virtually from scratch. The same may be said for the Quai d'Orsay.

In 1945, somewhere between 100 and 200 former French soldiers or members of the Resistance were granted admission to the “career” without an examination. That year also saw the founding of the *Ecole nationale d'administration* (ENA), whose purpose was to train civil servants; thereafter, a handful of its graduates would become diplomats. In theory this was a new dispensation, but in practice the old institutional mindset survived intact. As far as the Middle East was concerned, Zionism was seen as more of a danger than ever to what French diplomats were convinced would otherwise be a smooth and equitable relationship with Arab countries.

There are numerous attestations to this persistent attitude. As the historian Jean-Baptiste Duroselle has mildly observed, the first postwar foreign minister, Georges Bidault, was “not unreceptive to the arguments of the Islamists in the Quai d'Orsay.” Christian Pineau, a subsequent foreign minister well disposed toward Israel (and by chance the son-in-law of Jean Giraudoux), would write frankly in his autobiography that the Quai d'Orsay's Middle East policy was motivated by a “more or less conscious” anti-Semitism. Chauvel, the secretary general, used to caution journalists against Pineau and do what he could to frustrate the minister's initiatives. In his own memoirs Chauvel makes the revealing remark that at the end of the war, “Jews and Communists, formerly untouchables and moreover deported or living underground, had been reintegrated with honor into the community.”

The archives similarly expose the predispositions of the Quai d'Orsay. Early in 1945, a committee was set up “to examine the different problems posed by the Jewish question.” The committee seemed a hangover from Vichy. Its chairman, Henri Ponsot, considered one of the department's most eminent authorities on the Middle East, was at the same time regularly calling on the mufti, Haj Amin, to flatter and promote him. The Holocaust and its consequences feature in the archives only in a contorted and euphemistic style. This, for example, is from an April 15, 1945 report on postwar prospects:

It is probable that many Israelites who were obliged under one pressure or another to leave their country of origin or their residence would not like to return there. One can ask if on the one hand it might be useful to include in the peace treaties minority clauses in favor of Israelites, and if on the other hand it will be desirable to favor, by some means or other, their establishment either in Palestine or in another territory to be decided.

The committee rapidly concluded that Zionism faced “insurmountable obstacles” and Palestine was not the right place for a Jewish state.

Zionists with whom French diplomats were in contact are reviled or condescended to in various documents. David Ben-Gurion is said to be “avid with ambition.” At the top right-hand corner of a personal dossier devoted to him are the hand-written words, “Nationality: Jewish.” The dossier of Moshe Shertok (afterward Sharett) carries the same identification, and a separate note says, “Like all his compatriots he is highly gifted as a journalist of propaganda, but much less as a politician.” Abba

Eban "possesses the art of playing offended and making a travesty of facts." Of Menachem Begin the French consul in Haifa, Pierre Landy, wrote: "Of modest demeanor, he has the humble exterior of a small merchant."

French representatives in Cairo and Beirut, Damascus and Amman, insisted more and more urgently that any support for Zionism or the nascent state of Israel was bound to aggravate Arab nationalism and therefore to harm French interests. Moral issues, right or wrong, were not involved; power was at stake. Armand du Chayla, minister in Lebanon, compared the prospective Jewish state with wartime Japan; its "exacerbated will to power" was bound to lead to a similar catastrophe. Others in the department built their case on the alleged need to protect France's cultural and religious presence in the Holy Land.

Although France finally voted in favor of partition, beforehand it took whatever diplomatic measures were available to it both in the United Nations and elsewhere to avert or delay the vote. Alexandre Parodi, its delegate to the UN, would later explain that his country had been motivated by the desire to maintain good relations with the Arab world. If so, its final vote in favor of partition was a travesty, or so an anonymous official at the Quai d'Orsay pointed out to the foreign minister, writing that France was now a "banana republic," unable to hold its own against Britain (which had abstained in the voting).

In a diary entry of June 29, 1948, six weeks after Israel declared statehood, Vincent Auriol, then president of the Republic, recorded a meeting with Parodi. The latter was now of the view that a Jewish state in the midst of the Arab world was a guarantee of stability, and so in France's interest, but that matters should have been handled in such a way as to avoid anything like a defeat for the Arabs. No doubt out of some such consideration, France would refuse de-facto recognition of Israel until January 1949, and de-jure recognition until four months later. Such were the tergiversations and self-deceptions to which policy had sunk.

René Neuville was consul general in Jerusalem from 1946 to 1952. Undoubtedly intelligent, he was as narrow-minded as he was sincere. His inability to come to terms with the idea of a Jewish state offers a case study in the formation of policy within the Quai d'Orsay.

Jews, Neuville wrote in a lengthy dispatch dated April 12, 1947, were "racist through and through . . . quite as much as their German persecutors and in spite of their democratic pretensions." From bibli-

cal times onward, they had striven to inculcate within themselves the sense of being God's chosen people, and this bred a xenophobia and fanaticism that could not be ascribed to mere national feeling. The Zionist press, he further adduced, "displays beyond all possible doubt the ancestral traits of a completely Oriental cast of mind." Jews were on no account to be allowed any control over the holy places, and should be denied statehood.

In an equally characteristic report dated April 4, 1948, Neuville warned that the founding of a Jewish state would mean the death of any hopes once placed in the UN, a victory of "obscurantism over enlightenment . . . a pernicious example and a great peril." At the same time, Neuville foresaw an Arab victory in the hostilities to come, although he feared that this would itself lead to the danger of greater Arab militancy in French North Africa.

In April 1950, Neuville escorted his superior Jean Binoche on a week's visit around Israel. In a note to the Quai d'Orsay, Binoche said of Neuville that "he is susceptible, stormy, and bitter, but he has an ardor that I cannot find much exemplified in the people of our house." He recommended keeping Neuville in place, adding the thought that he should be brought to confer in Paris along with the ambassadors in both Israel and Jordan. "Today," according to the wistful Binoche, "it is indispensable for the department to define clearly the French political line."

Taking Advantage

THE COUP mounted in Cairo in 1952 by Gamal Abdel Nasser and other so-called Free Officers transformed Arab nationalism and pan-Islamism into popular causes. In one Arab country after another, and especially throughout French North Africa, claimants to power soon imitated Nasser. One of them was the National Liberation Front—FLN in its French acronym—in Algeria.

In November 1954, a series of violent terrorist acts signaled the opening of the FLN's campaign for independence. Nasser's radio station, the Voice of the Arabs, regularly incited the FLN; its leaders had their headquarters in Cairo, and Nasser supplied them clandestinely with arms. Lasting for eight bloody years, the conflict brought something approaching civil war in France itself, and the return of General de Gaulle to power. Meanwhile, the ups and downs of French policy had unforeseen but dramatic repercussions affecting the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

As a prime target of Nasser and Arab national-

ism, Israel unexpectedly acquired a community of interest with France—or rather with certain French decision-makers. Thus, the ministry of defense and the leaders of the armed forces collaborated unconditionally with Israel, in the belief that doing so would help overthrow Nasser and preserve French Algeria. Apart from a few hostile Catholic publications, the media were also supportive of Israel, as was public opinion at large. Guilt over wartime deportations figured as an element in the mix; so did admiration for Israel's spirit of self-determination. All this constituted an open—but partial—repudiation of the Quai d'Orsay and its ingrained pro-Arabism.

Arms sales alone were what gave France any importance in the Middle East. In the Israeli view, it was urgent to procure aircraft, tanks, and heavy artillery to prevent Nasser from exploiting the military edge conferred on him by the Soviet Union. While the United States and Britain took cover behind a declaration not to supply weapons to belligerents in the region, French manufacturers and the ministry of defense rushed to accommodate Israel. For its part, the Quai d'Orsay did what it could to block sales outright or to ensure that deliveries were too minimal to be effective.

The inter-ministerial fighting had something conspiratorial about it. Pierre-Etienne Gilbert, ambassador in Israel from 1953 to 1959 and altogether exceptional among his colleagues, was the first French diplomat openly to admire the Jewish state. Gilbert introduced Israel's defense establishment to its counterparts in Paris: Maurice Bourguès-Maunoury, the minister of defense, and Abel Thomas, his chief of staff. In *Comment Israël fut sauvé*, "How Israel Was Saved," Thomas recalls "our quarrels and our chicaneries with the Quai d'Orsay," and how "it was agreed that the administration of the Quai would in no case be involved" in policy concerning Israel. Consistently, the Quai d'Orsay reacted with anger and frustration; in March 1956, Pierre Maillard of the Afrique-Levant department informed an Israeli interlocutor that French-Israeli arms deal were an aberration, and there was no basis for cooperation between the two countries.

Egypt's September 1955 arms deal with Czechoslovakia, followed by nationalization of the Suez Canal the next July, were defining events of Nasser's career. The French and Israeli governments were of one mind: only a preemptive war could eliminate the danger Nasser now presented to them both. Prime Minister Guy Mollet undertook to persuade the hesitant British to join what became the real conspiracy behind the 1956 Suez

campaign. It was encapsulated in Foreign Minister Pineau's advice to the ministry of defense: "Above all, not a word to the Quai d'Orsay!"

But animosity and secrecy among those making vital decisions did not—could not—result in successful coordination. Fatefully, the United States intervened, obliging the British and French to withdraw their invading forces and then compelling Israel to evacuate Sinai and the Gaza strip. In 1957, in a compensatory gesture, France agreed to build for Israel a nuclear plant at Dimona, an installation more up-to-date than anything the French themselves possessed at the time. From that point on, the France-Israel relationship declined in inexorable stages.

NASSER'S EMERGENCE as the political victor of the Suez campaign inflated Arab nationalism into the prime ideology of the Middle East. The FLN was evidently going to gain power in Algeria, the French army to lose it. In 1958, emerging from seclusion, de Gaulle once more enacted his role as national savior. Even as the Suez campaign ushered in the Fifth Republic, it transformed the Arab-Israeli dispute into one of the most complex of international issues.

Methodically, the Quai d'Orsay began the French disengagement from Israel. In 1959, in deference to the Arab economic boycott, it managed to cancel a contract to assemble Renault cars under license in Haifa. The following year, Ben-Gurion met de Gaulle at the Elysée Palace; the Quai d'Orsay was at pains to ensure that this was not seen as a state visit, and that the Israeli flag would not fly at Ben-Gurion's hotel.

In an official report presented to de Gaulle in 1963, Jean Chauvel wrote that Israel displayed "a heterogeneous character in relation to everything surrounding it." This euphemism for Israeli aberrancy led to the conclusion that, since good Franco-Israeli relations "in no way gain France any credit in Arabia," closer cooperation between Arabs and France "is not only acceptable, it is desired." Under Maurice Couve de Murville, de Gaulle's long-standing foreign minister and a critic of the Suez campaign (and advocate of Algerian independence), the Quai d'Orsay took revenge for the Pineau years by, as the historians Samir Kassir and Farouk Mardam-Bey have put it, successfully reaffirming its old "Muslim policy."

The hitch was that the constitution of the Fifth Republic had handed the conduct of foreign policy to the president, with the result that the Quai d'Orsay's role was reduced to advice and adminis-

tration. Always idiosyncratic, de Gaulle enacted a policy often grounded more in personality than in political reality. Although there are numerous testimonies to his professed admiration for Israel and its achievements, it is also true that he had once been influenced by Charles Maurras, an ardent enemy of Jews. As for Arabs, Ambassador Gilbert quotes de Gaulle as saying that they were "all passion, sometimes even demented. What can you do with that?" In all likelihood, his deepest belief was that Jews and Arabs, like everyone else, had to serve the purposes he allotted to them.

Above all, de Gaulle aspired to great-power status for France, and toward that end he sought to maneuver between the United States and the Soviet Union, playing them off against each other and eventually removing France from NATO. The hope was that this brand of militant neutrality would muster the whole third world behind him. Pineau, the former foreign minister, spoke for many in noting that de Gaulle felt "a mortal hatred" for the British and the U.S. Increasingly resentful of the latter's projection of power in the Middle East, de Gaulle suspended aid to Israel's nuclear plant; played cat-and-mouse games over sales of arms and aircraft to Israel; and, after signing a peace treaty with Algeria, issued instructions to his new ambassador in Cairo to adopt "a more liberal attitude toward Nasser." When Abba Eban, the Israeli foreign minister, expressed anxiety in early 1966 over Israel's relationship with France, an irritated Couve de Murville replied that "General de Gaulle doesn't have to be patting you ceaselessly on the shoulder to reassure you."

In a series of political and military miscalculations, Nasser precipitated the Six-Day war of 1967. During the run-up to the crisis, France embargoed the delivery of offensive weapons to the Middle East, a move affecting only Israel. In a meeting with Abba Eban, de Gaulle warned Israel not to fire the first shot. ("They didn't listen to me!", he was to exclaim in anger and hurt pride a few days later.) He also told British Prime Minister Harold Wilson that the West would thank him one day for remaining "the only Western power to have any influence with the Arab governments."

After the war, Roger Seydoux, now France's permanent representative at the United Nations, lost no time declaring that Israel's reunification of Jerusalem was "inopportune and not founded in law." Israeli assurances of free access to the holy places "touched on questions of sovereignty to which we cannot remain indifferent." That November, de Gaulle ranted in public that the Jews

were "an elite people, self-assured and domineering," and possessed of "a burning ambition for conquest." In the ensuing scandal, de Gaulle pretended that his abusive generalizations had been intended as compliments.

In January 1969, in response to Palestinian hijackers operating out of Lebanon, Israeli commandos blew up thirteen civil aircraft in Beirut. Nobody was hurt in this largely symbolic action. "It's unbelievable, without any sense," de Gaulle nevertheless thundered. "They think they can do as they like." The arms embargo was now extended to all weapons, defensive as well as offensive. France thereby renounced any influence it had on Israel (as the political thinker Raymond Aron argued at the time in a polemic of great force). Meanwhile, René Massigli, highly respected as a former ambassador to London and later as secretary general of the Quai d'Orsay, spoke for the foreign-policy establishment by repeating in print the shopworn canard that French Jews who supported Israel were guilty of dual loyalty.

Although de Gaulle had once been wary of the Quai d'Orsay, he too ended by speaking of France as a "Muslim power." In his memoirs, his summary judgment was that "no strategic, political, or economic state of affairs [in the Middle East] will last unless it gets Arab support." But his self-importance had stranded his country in contradiction, prejudice, and grudge. François Mauriac, a Nobel Prize winner and fervent Gaullist, wrote in 1969: "I saw men whom the General's policy toward Jerusalem had driven mad." The Quai d'Orsay had won, but there was nothing to show for it.

Terminal Contradictions

As ARAB immigration into France increased, successive French presidents extended de Gaulle's policy of closely linking France and the Arab states. In the decades after the 1967 war, France steadily nourished the ambition to lead what would become the European Union and to assemble a bloc powerful enough to rival the United States. In line with this, the principal objective in the Middle East was to broker a peace that would satisfy Arab demands on Israel and thus eliminate American influence.

Outright appeasement of the Arabs was complicated both by French self-interest and by Arab resentments over a lost heritage perceived as glorious. Measures nevertheless were taken. They included the pursuit of favorable oil contracts, especially in the aftermath of the 1973 war and the OPEC em-

bargo; the sale of Mirage fighter planes to Libya and the building of the Osirak nuclear reactor for Iraq; a vote at the United Nations accusing Israel of committing war crimes in the occupied territories; the denial of landing rights to American aircraft during the 1973 Yom Kippur war; permission granted to the PLO to open an office in Paris, and the reception of Yasir Arafat at the Elysée Palace; and diplomatic initiatives to protect Saddam Hussein from the consequences of his multiple aggressions. With the exception of the former Soviet Union, no country did more than France to promote a PLO state, and thereby to endanger the existence of Israel.

Anti-Israel policies strengthened under Presidents Georges Pompidou, who served from 1969 until his sudden death in 1974, and his successor Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The former was in all likelihood no more anti-Semitic than his mentor de Gaulle. The latter, too, may not have had anything personal against either Israel or Jews, yet his presidency from 1974 to 1981 intensified the harm done to them and the favoring of Arabs. At the outset of Giscard's term in office, and clearly at his direction, the Quai d'Orsay issued a PLO-influenced statement to the effect that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East had to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. Soon he sent his foreign minister, Jean Sauvagnargues, to Lebanon for an official meeting with Arafat; the secretary general of the Quai d'Orsay then helped set up the PLO office in Paris. In one rather mysterious incident, Abu Daoud, a terrorist at the head of the group responsible for the murder of Israeli Olympic athletes at Munich, was arrested for murder while in Paris but almost instantly released to Algeria. Eventually Giscard invited Arafat on an official visit to Paris.

THE 1973 war deepened the fault lines among Western allies. Setting the countries of the European Community against the United States, Giscard refused to abstain from finalizing a deal for Iraq's nuclear plant and actively sought to replace the weakening Soviet Union as the chief arms supplier of Egypt and Syria. In language identical to the PLO's, he criticized the peace between Egypt and Israel sealed at Camp David in 1978. The analyst Maurice Szafran speaks of "open warfare" between France's Jews and Giscard.

Foreign ministers in this period uniformly supported the appeasement of Arab states. Of them all, the most single-minded was Michel Jobert, who took over the Quai d'Orsay in 1973. Born in Morocco, he spoke fluent Arabic and had once written

a novel, set in his home town of Meknes, that featured obnoxious Jewish characters. French foreign policy, Jobert used to explain, was not pro-Arab but simply "active, a just reflection of the interests of France" in the Arab part of the world.

Succeeding Giscard as president, François Mitterrand—a 30's fascist, a Vichy official, a Gaullist, a socialist—was a man politically, morally, and personally corrupt. His presidency from 1981 to 1995 bore the stamp of his opportunistic personality and cynical intelligence. Quickly, Mitterrand demonstrated what *Le Monde* was to call his "talent for trickery."

Mitterrand had once visited Israel, and now he let it be known that he intended to restore good relations with Jerusalem. But as his secretary Jacques Attali records in his published diary (*Verbatim*), Mitterrand covered his flanks by ordering two of his foreign-policy aides, Hubert Védrine (a future foreign minister) and Claude de Kemoularia, to make the rounds of Arab embassies in Paris and explain that "good contact between France and Israel will be in your interest." Mitterrand's two-faced approach was exemplified by his condemnation of Israel's destruction of the Iraqi nuclear plant in 1982 followed by a fawning address to the Knesset some months later, or by his airy proposal of a federation of Jordan, Israel, and Arab Palestine that was incompatible with his role in preserving Arafat from the consequences of his multiple campaigns of violence and terrorist mayhem.

With characteristic equivocation, Mitterrand maintained the Quai d'Orsay as Europe's foremost official pro-Arab and anti-Israel lobby. Kemoularia, entrusted with confidential matters, had close connections to Saudi Arabia. For the first three years of Mitterrand's term, the foreign minister was Claude Cheysson, whose hostility to Israel was matched by his friendship with PLO representatives like Naim Khadir in Brussels. "My condemnation of Zionism is absolute," he was to say once he was no longer minister. "The state of Israel created itself against the will of the rest of the world."

Roland Dumas followed Cheysson in 1984. Within three months of taking office, Dumas visited Arafat in Tunis, where the PLO leader had taken refuge after his forced evacuation from Beirut. A lawyer, Dumas had helped defend Hilarion Capucci, a Greek Orthodox priest caught gun-running for the PLO, and he played a part in ensuring that the terrorist Abu Daoud was hurried out of the country in the 1970's. Air piracy, he was to tell a newspaper in December 1984, "was the only way for Palestinian resistance to smash international indifference."

Under Cheysson, the Quai d'Orsay's secretary general was Francis Gutmann, parachuted into the ministry from a previous job with the Red Cross. A colleague of Jobert's, he had impeccable Arabist credentials. Later, the post went to another influential Arabist, Bertrand Dufourcq, who had served on the staffs of Couve de Murville, Cheysson, and Dumas. PLO documents captured by the Israeli army in Beirut in 1982 showed that French diplomats or their informers in Tel Aviv and Damascus had been leaking information about Israel's impending operation. In 1987 it emerged that the Quai d'Orsay was subsidizing an Arab lobby, the *Cercle France-Pays Arabes*. In return for such favors, ostensibly, Arafat brought himself to pronounce after another official visit to Paris in 1989 that the clauses of the PLO Charter calling for the destruction of Israel were "*caduc*," null and void. As events were to prove, this unexpected display of mastery of French masked an empty promise.

FRANCE'S CURRENT president, Jacques Chirac, began his career in the governments of de Gaulle and Pompidou, becoming prime minister under Giscard as well as Mitterrand before being elected president in 1996. In the several crises engulfing the Middle East during his tenure, Chirac has imitated his predecessors by taking issue with the "Anglo-Saxons," a Vichy-style phrase loose enough to include the United States, Britain, and anyone else perceived to stand in France's way.

In April 1996, in a speech in Cairo, Chirac claimed that France intended to follow its traditional policies in the Middle East with renewed vigor. Visiting Jerusalem that October, and walking through the Old City, he accused Israeli security guards of closing in on him, pushing them away angrily with a gesture as symbolic as it was physical. At his next stop, in Ramallah, he declared that Arafat's Palestinian democracy might serve as an example to all Arab states. Moving on to Amman in Jordan, he denounced the Western sanctions on Saddam Hussein, with whom he had maintained a friendly relationship dating back to the mid-1970's. He advised Arafat not to sign at Camp David in 2000.

By means of supporting Arafat and Saddam, France was clearly hoping to lever itself into a position of mastery in areas where once Britain had been supreme and where the United States now had responsibility for keeping the peace. The end of the Oslo peace process and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa *intifada* in 2000, the failure of the United Nations weapons inspectors in Iraq, the wrangling over Resolution 1441 at the UN and then the invasion of

Iraq in 2003—all spurred Chirac and his administration to prolonged diplomatic activity in pursuit of this grand design. The results have hardly been impressive.

Recently the Quai d'Orsay has condemned Israel's efforts to contain Hizballah in southern Lebanon, and criticized the annexation of Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem. The foreign ministry dragged out the effort to block the Hizballah television station al-Manar from spreading its hatred of Jews via a Paris-based satellite, and the French government still steadfastly refuses to designate Hizballah itself as a terrorist organization. Sophie Pommier, the official responsible for following Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, revealed her emotional involvement in her work by plastering the walls of her office with portraits of Arafat. French consulates have been forbidden from recognizing Jewish weddings solemnized by West Bank rabbis. Jacques Huntziger, the French ambassador to Israel, slammed his fist on the table and left the room when the parents of three Israeli soldiers captured by Hizballah asked him to intervene on their behalf after a visit by Chirac to Lebanon. Gérard Araud, the current French ambassador, declared in December 2004 that "Israelis suffer from a neurosis, a veritable mental disorder that makes them anti-French." At a London dinner party, Daniel Bernard, ambassador to England and previously the Quai d'Orsay's official spokesman, called Israel "a shitty little country." And so it goes.

As such pinpricks suggest, France today lacks the resources and the influence either to supplant the United States or to enlist the Arab world in its camp, to create a Palestinian state, or to dismantle Israel. Moreover, its nuisance value has rebounded on itself. Its chosen instruments, Saddam Hussein and Arafat, both proved untrustworthy: support for the former was evidently related to French profiteering from the UN oil-for-food scam, which dwarfed the corruption even of the Mitterrand era, and support for the latter had roots in obscure deals, protection rackets, and emotional anti-Americanism.

In the Middle East, France has forfeited whatever leverage it might once have enjoyed. At home, meanwhile, it has had to come to terms with a growing Arab underclass, one whose resentments and tendencies to violence have been whipped up in no small part by the inflexible hostility displayed by the French state to Jewish self-determination. The pursuit of *une puissance musulmane*, fitting Arabs and Jews into a grand design on French terms, has evidently been an intellectual illusion all along, and highly dangerous to the interests of everyone concerned.

Investing in Conservative Ideas

James Piereson

THIS PAST fall, shortly before the presidential election in November, some 300 friends and admirers gathered at the Plaza Hotel in New York City to pay tribute to John Kenneth Galbraith and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., the two aged warhorses of 20th-century liberalism. The event, sponsored by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, was billed as a “salute to democracy.” It was also an occasion to recall an era when liberalism ran at high tide in the United States—a tough-minded doctrine that stood boldly for the working man at home and against tyranny abroad. The contrast between the past and the present must have been painful to many in attendance that night: today, the decline of the faith is mirrored in the fact that there is simply no one on the Left whose influence or stature even remotely approaches that attained so many decades ago by the evening’s two honorees.

The long descent of liberalism in recent decades has, no doubt, been not just a painful but a perplexing development for those once convinced that the future would be shaped by their ideals. The rise of conservatism must seem doubly perplexing. Galbraith himself had remarked, in 1964, “These are without doubt the years of the liberal. Almost everyone so describes himself.” And both he and

JAMES PIERESON, *here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, taught political science at the University of Pennsylvania before joining the John M. Olin Foundation in 1981. From 1985 until this year, when it made its final grants, he served as the foundation’s executive director.*

Schlesinger had dismissed conservative thought in the most derisive terms as without intellectual substance of any kind. Today, not only has conservatism risen to prominence in the electoral sphere, but conservative thought has seized the initiative in the world of ideas as well.

Of course, there have been attempts by liberals to account for this reversal of fortune; but few have been accurate, thoughtful, or constructive. During last year’s presidential campaign, the general tone was well captured in liberal assaults on George W. Bush as a “liar” or an “idiot” for pursuing precisely the sort of cause—deploying American power on behalf of liberty and democracy in the world—that liberals like Galbraith and Schlesinger once championed. Addressing the rise of conservatism, the Left resorts to explanations that stress manipulation and trickery, with corporate payoffs to politicians looming large in the story. Conservative ideas play but a minor role in the account, and are themselves generally characterized as mere stalking horses for corporate interests. A particularly sinister role is ascribed to those conservative philanthropies that have helped fund thinkers, magazines, and research institutions—on the assumption that no one would advance such self-evidently meretricious ideas unless paid to do so.

Indeed, the Left has displayed a near-obsessive interest in conservative philanthropies. A number of websites are devoted entirely to charting the activities of the “right-wing foundations established

by major corporate polluters,” as the environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., describes them in his book, *Crimes Against Nature*. Similarly, the journalists David Brock and Eric Alterman have devoted much energy to “exposing” the projects supported by these institutions as well as their links to other organizations and their place in the broader constellation of conservative activism. Reports by People for the American Way and the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy dwell with heavy emphasis on the supposedly nefarious strategies and tactics employed by the foundations to advance their highly dubious cause.

Invariably, these broadsides ignore the substance of the ideas themselves, quite as if John Stuart Mill’s famous characterization of conservatives as “the stupid party” were still the rule in the early 21st century. But the plain fact is that modern conservatives have been engaged with the world of ideas to a far greater extent than most modern liberals. The columnist David Brooks has observed that, asked to name influences on their thinking, most conservatives are able to list a number of books or authors, while liberals have difficulty identifying any. This lively engagement with a coherent body of ideas forms a crucial if much overlooked aspect of the rise of conservatism, and one in which conservative foundations have played a central role.

IN THE period running from the end of World War II down to the present, conservative philanthropy has gone through at least two distinct phases, and is now entering a third. Surprising as it may seem, both earlier phases were defined by ideas rather than by narrow business or corporate interests.

The first phase, which began in the mid-1940’s and ran well into the 70’s, was guided more by an interest in classical liberalism and libertarianism than in conservatism as it has been understood more recently. The main donors were the Volker Fund, the Reim and Earhart foundations, the Liberty Fund, and business leaders like Jasper Crane of DuPont, Henry Weaver of General Motors, B.E. Hutchinson of Chrysler, and the British entrepreneur Anthony Fisher. (The Earhart Foundation and the Liberty Fund live on today.) These donors had only modest sums at their disposal, giving altogether around \$3 million per year as compared with the \$300 million that the Ford Foundation alone allocated annually in the mid-1960’s.

There were, to be sure, important differences among these donors. The Volker Fund was gener-

ally libertarian in its approach, while the Earhart Foundation bridged the divide between classical liberalism, with its emphasis on liberty, and modern conservatism, with its emphasis on tradition and order. But the interests of all of them were, by design, intellectual and theoretical.

The seminal influence on these funders was F.A. Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*, published in London in 1944 and in the United States the following year. This slender volume, an articulate call to battle against socialism, turned its author, then an obscure professor at the London School of Economics, into an enduring hero among conservatives and classical liberals on both sides of the Atlantic. No other writer at the time had made the case against collectivist ideas and policies with such audacity and clarity. For this reason alone, *The Road to Serfdom* quickly became a reference point for those with misgivings about the expanding welfare state.

Named in many surveys as one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *The Road to Serfdom* caused something of a sensation when first published, provoking reviews and comment from such leading figures as John Maynard Keynes and George Orwell, and scathing rebukes and rebuttals from scores of lesser lights. A condensed version, brought out in 1945 by *Reader’s Digest*, reached over 2 million of the magazine’s subscribers and aroused enough interest to bring Hayek to the U.S. for a national lecture tour.

The Road to Serfdom advanced two broad themes, one negative and the other positive. The first was that socialism leads almost inevitably to tyranny and the loss of liberty in all of its forms. The second was that the antidote to socialism is to be found in the revival of classical liberalism as articulated by British-Enlightenment thinkers like Adam Smith, David Hume, and Edmund Burke. The book was in some ways highly pessimistic: socialism was advancing everywhere and appeared irresistible. (As if to confirm Hayek’s analysis, England’s 1945 parliamentary election saw the Labor party winning on a platform that called explicitly for the nationalization of British industry, and the victorious party proceeded to make good on its promise.) At the same time, Hayek saw a way out through the revival of a tradition of thought that was in the process of being lost.

As for present-day conservatism, in Hayek’s view it suffered from a fatal weakness. Because it relied on tradition rather than principle, it could slow down or resist but never fundamentally alter the direction in which events were moving. That is why he took pains to emphasize that he himself was

not a conservative at all, but rather a liberal in the Whig tradition. (A later essay of his was titled, simply, "Why I Am Not a Conservative.") This, as it happened, was one feature of Hayek's thinking that appealed in particular to Americans.

The American polity, as Hayek understood, was originally built on the principle of liberty, and its political tradition was greatly influenced by the Whig ideals of limited government and the rule of law. As a consequence, defenders of the American tradition were themselves frequently "liberals" in the European sense. For Americans concerned about the expansion of government, the alternative to socialism and the welfare state was not conservatism but individualism.

Another enduring contribution of *The Road to Serfdom*, perhaps more influential in the long run than Hayek's critique of socialism, was its emphasis on the importance of ideas in the growth of political movements. Challenging the assumptions of the historical school of thought, Hayek insisted that socialism and statism were products not of economic forces beyond anyone's control but of erroneous and destructive *ideas*. The Whig principles that had influenced continental thought during the 18th and 19th centuries had been displaced by German thinkers from Hegel and Marx down to Sombart and Mannheim, whose collectivist doctrines had captured the imagination of intellectuals. In another essay, "The Intellectuals and Socialism" (1949), Hayek mapped out a broad, long-term strategy for combating this challenge.

Practical men of business, Hayek wrote, were at a decided disadvantage in the war of ideas because of their deep distrust of theoretical speculation and their "tendency to orthodoxy." Businessmen, moreover, did not understand the link between ideas and political movements, and therefore did not see the need to mount a sustained intellectual defense of their own interests. He urged his followers to learn from the success of socialism, which had originated as a construction of theorists and philosophers and only later emerged as a political movement fielding candidates for office and appealing to voters.

"What we lack," Hayek wrote, "is a liberal Utopia, a program which seems neither a defense of things as they are nor a diluted kind of socialism, but a truly liberal radicalism . . . which does not confine itself to what appears today as politically possible." The positive content of such a program was necessarily vague, but it was plain that Hayek envisioned a movement operating at the level of principles and theory and aloof from electoral and

legislative agendas or the immediate controversies of political life. He proposed, in other words, a true war of ideas, one that might appeal to the best and most adventuresome minds of the age but that might take a generation or more to bear fruit.

HAYEK'S PLATFORM—theoretical, abstract, and utopian—might seem an odd basis on which to build a philanthropic program. There was no pretense here of promoting piecemeal reforms, of helping a party or a candidate, of passing a piece of legislation, or, indeed, of producing immediate consequences of any kind. Yet the philanthropists I have mentioned responded to his call.*

Hayek's writings had a more or less direct impact in Great Britain, where Anthony Fisher (with Hayek's encouragement) established the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) in London in 1955. Directed by the economist Ralph Harris, the IEA was the original free-market think tank, publishing books and pamphlets that documented the inefficiencies of socialism and state-run enterprises. True to Hayek's prediction, it would spend more than two decades advancing these ideas and gradually winning converts until a sympathetic friend, Margaret Thatcher, was elected prime minister and began to implement reforms that were much influenced by its work.

In 1947, the Volker Fund sent a group of Americans to Switzerland for the organizing meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, founded by Hayek to promote the free market in economics and the broad ideals of classical liberalism. In conformity with Hayek's vision, Mont Pelerin functioned as an exclusively scholarly enterprise, avoiding political debate in favor of in-depth theorizing about the foundations of a free society. A short time later, Volker underwrote Hayek's appointment as professor of moral science—Adam Smith's title at the University of Edinburgh—in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, and also provided funds for New York University to hire Ludwig von Mises, Hayek's Austrian mentor and friend.

In addition to these appointments, Volker and

* Because of their theoretical approach, these donors were not necessarily involved in some of the other key intellectual events of the period, among them the founding of *National Review* in 1955. In launching this magazine, which was to play so great a role in the rise of modern conservatism, William F. Buckley, Jr., aimed to create a forum of ideas that would at the same time address the controversial issues of the day; he also intended it as a for-profit enterprise, legally free to support and oppose candidates for public office. Both factors made the participation of these particular donors unlikely; in addition, their commitment to classical liberalism did not fit neatly with Buckley's own economic views.

other donors lent assistance to the “Chicago School” of economics, led by Milton Friedman and George Stigler, and to the University of Virginia’s school of political economy led by James Buchanan—all three of whom would later win the Nobel Prize in economics. They supported hundreds, perhaps thousands, of graduate students, mostly in economics but also in allied fields like government and history; many later became prominent scholars in their own right. And they subsidized a few institutions, generally libertarian in outlook, including the Foundation for Economic Education, the Institute for Human Studies, and the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, which helped circulate market-oriented ideas to professors, students, and even businessmen.

It is difficult to recall today how radical the ideas of a Friedman or a Hayek appeared in the 1950’s and 60’s, when the future seemed already to point in the direction of central planning, socialism, and the welfare state. In this phase of things, the role of philanthropy was largely to maintain the vitality of a remnant of thought until it could be brought forth again as an alternative to doctrines that had failed. That the movement did not find its way into the wider world of policy and public debate was in part, as we have seen, deliberate: aiming for influence beyond the daily headlines, Hayek and his followers eschewed a strategy that might have enabled them to reach a broader audience. But, working as they were against the intellectual grain of the time, they also had little success in breaking into the world of the universities—and without gaining a foothold in the academy, there was little hope of converting the next generation of scholars. By the mid-1970’s, Hayek himself had been dismissed as an extremist, even a reactionary, and the influence of the classical liberals was at a low ebb.

IF THE work of the conservative foundations in this period attracted little attention beyond their immediate circle—Waldemar Nielsen’s standard histories, *The Big Foundations* and *The Golden Donors*, do not mention them at all—the leading liberal philanthropies were, by contrast, advancing their own agenda with vigor and to general applause. These foundations—Ford and Rockefeller, along with the Carnegie Corporation—were guided by the view that social progress was to be achieved through expert knowledge and scientific research, by the expansion of government’s role into new areas, and by the use of international organizations to promote cooperation among the major powers. Their funds went to well-entrenched and highly re-

garded institutions: universities, research centers, international organizations, and, occasionally, governmental bodies. In sum, the liberal foundations formed an integral part of the era’s liberal establishment, a circumstance for which they were roundly criticized (to little effect) by both conservatives and left-wing radicals.

A significant shift in liberal philanthropy took place after McGeorge Bundy, a former dean at Harvard and National Security Adviser to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, was appointed president of the Ford Foundation in 1966. Sharply preferring activism to research and expertise, Bundy pioneered a strategy of “advocacy philanthropy.” Soon Ford and other liberal donors were investing in a maze of activist groups promoting feminism, affirmative action, environmentalism, disarmament, and other cutting-edge causes. The Environmental Defense Fund, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Women’s Law Fund, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, were among the products of this initiative.

These groups claimed to speak for and to be the legitimate representatives of their respective causes. In that capacity, they promoted ideas that led to legislation, and then sought to influence the regulatory bodies and federal courts that implemented and interpreted the laws. Thus, Ford and Bundy helped develop an institutional structure that, by means of litigation and the leverage it exercised over administrative agencies, could push its favored programs beyond any limits contemplated by the politicians who enacted them.

A strategy designed to bring about large change by circumventing the electoral process was well suited to philanthropic institutions with links to experts and advocates. And it led indisputably to results: employment quotas for women and minority groups, the expansion of welfare, new environmental legislation, and the like. It also produced some spectacular blowouts, most notably the effort in 1968 by the Ford Foundation to decentralize the New York City public schools. Over the long run, the Bundy approach was instrumental in inventing what is by now a familiar phenomenon on the American political scene: the well-placed advocacy group nursing a grievance against American society and seeking compensation on behalf of its members.

REINFORCING THIS trend was the fact that, simultaneously, the Democratic party was beginning to alter itself along parallel lines. Following the tu-

mult at their 1968 convention in Chicago, the Democrats established a commission, chaired by Senator George McGovern, whose mandate was to make the nominating process more representative. Quickly captured by liberal activists, the commission pushed through new delegate-selection rules requiring the representation of women, blacks, and young people in line with their respective proportions in the population.

The effect was to displace the elected office holders, party officials, and union leaders who had controlled Democratic conventions in the past and to replace them with activists speaking for designated groups. Under this approach, the groups that now found a home in the party began to look very much like the ones Bundy had tried to organize through the Ford Foundation. In many cases, they were the same groups.

Finally, liberalism itself came to be recast along interest-group lines. The welfare state was redefined from a package of programs through which Americans lent assistance to the poor, the sick, and the disabled to a system through which certain defined groups could command government support as a matter of right and as compensation for past injustices. Society was cast as the guilty party, the recipients as its aggrieved victims. This sleight-of-hand in turn made it difficult for government to require the beneficiaries of its aid to adapt their behavior to the standards of middle-class life.

As liberalism gradually absorbed the adversarial assumptions of the age, group-based claims became ever more strident and accusations of discrimination and injustice multiplied. In time, the new order would erase those large-hearted features of liberal philosophy that had made it appealing to middle-class Americans from the 1930's through the 1960's.

These developments could not have been foreseen. They were not a consequence of broad social or economic factors or of public pressure. Rather, they were engineered by a narrow circle of activists with access to money and influence within the Democratic party. They also defied Hayek's assessment that far-reaching changes take a generation or more to be put into place. Here, an established doctrine and a political party with a proud tradition were turned upside down within just a few years.

At the time, many observers took note of the role that charitable foundations had played in this upheaval. Inserting themselves into the political life of the nation, liberal philanthropists parlayed their ability to fund experts, research, and advocacy groups into a new potential for influence. With

their inbuilt advantage over elected politicians and traditional business associations, they were a quintessential expression of what came to be known as the "new politics," a politics driven largely by ideas. This was, without question, a crucial development in our political life—and in response to it, more than a few conservatives, joined by alarmed or disillusioned liberals, began to look for a different way.

THIS BRINGS us to the second phase of conservative philanthropy. It began to take shape in the mid-1970's through the work of a handful of donors, especially the John M. Olin and Smith Richardson foundations and, later, the Bradley Foundation. The Scaife Trusts of Pittsburgh were also involved to a certain degree.

These funders were more self-consciously conservative than libertarian. While sympathetic to the writings of Hayek and the ideals of classical liberalism, they adopted a broader intellectual framework encompassing fields beyond economics: preeminently religion, foreign policy, and the traditional humanities. In contrast to Hayek and his followers, they were also prepared to engage the world of politics and policy and to wage the war of ideas in a direct and aggressive style.

The foundations themselves had been endowed by successful businessmen who wished to preserve the system of private enterprise that had enabled the country to prosper. In the mid-1970's, the outlook for any such program appeared especially bleak, but the sense of swimming against the tide gave their efforts an air of invigorating urgency. And they soon discovered, within the intellectual world, a seemingly unlikely group of allies imbued with a no less urgent set of priorities.

Just as the earlier donors had looked to Hayek for guidance, these foundations looked to the neo-conservatives. Writers and editors like Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Hilton Kramer, and Michael Novak had for the most part spent their formative years on the Left. Rather than by Hayek, their ideas had been influenced by George Orwell, Lionel Trilling, and Raymond Aron—intellectuals of Hayek's generation who had dwelled on the evil of totalitarianism from a moral and political standpoint. Many of them, like Hayek, traced their intellectual lineage back to the 18th-century Whigs, but in so doing they once again emphasized the moral and cultural rather than the economic dimension, typically preferring Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* to his *The Wealth of Nations*. In brief, they understood the moral foundations of a

free society to be prior to and more important than its economic foundations.

The neoconservatives had an added advantage: having come from the Left, they understood the thought processes of contemporary liberals and leftists. They also understood that the war of ideas had to be fought by engaging in real-world controversies, with stakes wagered on the outcome. Through their writings, and through the advice they were able to offer, they helped to orient the conservative foundations to the ongoing contest over which set of ideas would govern the nation.

The political world that these writers saw around them in the 1970's looked much different from the one that had so troubled Hayek in London in 1944. Instead of leading us down the path to collectivism, the welfare state had produced fragmentation, group conflict, disorder, and a general loss of authority in society. In the United States, moreover, the welfare state had advanced itself not through the nationalization of industry but through incremental expansions of social programs and accretions to federal regulatory power. It was the intersection of these programs with the cultural revolution of the 1960's and 70's that gave rise, as the neoconservatives saw it, to urban crime, illegitimacy, broken families, and educational failure. The contemporary problem was thus not so much collectivism or socialism as the loss of morale and self-confidence that was in some ways characteristic of all affluent societies—a problem to which classical liberalism did not promise any obvious solution.

In contrast to Hayekian liberalism, neoconservatism never developed a full-blown theory of government, economics, or society. (Instead of a movement, neoconservatism itself was more a “persuasion,” as Kristol called it, or a “tendency,” as Podhoretz described it.) Rejecting orthodoxies and abstract theories alike, the neoconservatives tended to operate in close proximity to ongoing events. Kristol, though sympathetic to Hayek, once wrote that “he too often gives the impression that he considers reality to be one immense deviation from true doctrine.”

In keeping with this stress on real-world outcomes, neoconservatives drew upon social science to assess the practical consequences of the various programs and policies that made up the modern welfare state. Documenting the disturbing consequences of initiatives that had promised to end poverty or to transform the cities, analysts like James Q. Wilson and Charles Murray demonstrat-

ed that ideas adopted with the best of intentions were making matters worse. The effect of such studies was to throw cold water on the vast expectations that had been nourished by liberal theorists and activists. As promises were scaled back, so was the momentum behind the expansion of the welfare state.

NOT THAT the neoconservatives were against a welfare state in principle, or necessarily embraced the unfettered market as an alternative. They criticized the welfare state because it demoralized the poor and made them dependent on government, but they hardly objected to well-crafted measures to aid the unemployed. A conservative welfare state, one that encouraged work, family, and middle-class values, was something they could endorse. In foreign policy, they believed that the cold war was a vital moral and political struggle, and rejected efforts to conciliate the Soviet Union as naïve or worse. In another time, they might well have been called liberals; in the 1970's and beyond, they were most definitely conservatives.

Like Hayek, the neoconservatives envisioned an important role for intellectuals, but they were not prepared to wait a full generation for their efforts to yield results. It was plain that liberal and left-wing intellectuals had promoted ideas and programs that were wildly out of touch with the operating assumptions of the vast majority of Americans. This opened up an opportunity. The task of conservatism, as Kristol said, was “to show the American people that they are right and the intellectuals are wrong.” Over time, that is more or less what happened.

What the neoconservatives understood was that neither the intellectuals' dislike for capitalism nor their penchant for socialism was a function of economic analysis. By the mid-1970's, the economic promise of socialism was dead; it was obvious to everyone that socialist economies could not even feed their own people. What attracted liberal intellectuals to socialism was something else: mainly, the idea of community, which they contrasted invidiously to the individualism and competition of a market society.

Thus, as Kristol and others argued, an effective defense of capitalism required a defense of the cultural assumptions on which a commercial civilization is based. It had to be shown that free societies encouraged values far superior to anything that socialism could deliver.

The conservative foundations followed this lead. Though they continued to fund programs in free-

market economics, they also made gifts in the fields of history, philosophy, government, even art and literature. They came to consider religion, morals, and marriage to be as important as economics and markets—and closely bound up with them. The foundations strove to move into every major area of debate and controversy. They allocated funds to prominent institutions, including Ivy League universities where conservative ideas were in a decided minority, and they proved ready and willing to support magazines and journals addressing a spectrum of controversial issues.

Such magazines, they understood, were not simply products for sale in the marketplace, as businessmen might see them, but institutions in their own right, with ongoing responsibilities, reputations to be built and preserved, and networks of authors and supporters. Above all, they were seedbeds of ideas, nurseries of new talent. Not only was their cumulative effect large, but individual articles published in any one of them could have far-reaching consequences.

The neoconservative magazines, *COMMENTARY* and the *Public Interest* in particular, routinely published authors whose critiques of liberal ideas and policies were factual, pointed, and ruthlessly logical, and whose analyses pointed the way to everything from the welfare reform of the late 1990's to the paradigm shift in American global policy that is being carried out by the Bush administration. There were also the *New Criterion*, a journal of literature and the arts edited by Hilton Kramer, and the *National Interest*, a foreign-policy quarterly established by Kristol and edited for many years by Owen Harries.

In bringing a different approach and emphasis to modern conservatism, the neoconservatives enlarged its appeal, made it more effective in the political world, and helped it to adapt to the challenges of the time. The advance of conservatism in recent decades owes much to them, and to their partnership with the conservative foundations.

IN ADDITION to aiding institutions shaped by neo-conservatives, the foundations supported magazines, think tanks, and research centers led by free-market economists, libertarians, religious conservatives, and even Straussian philosophers. When Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, there were but a few organizations that he could look to for research and information; by the time George W. Bush was elected in 2000, there was a proliferation of such groups working actively in every area of public policy. These organizations have developed

ideas and nurtured talent that over time have helped change the balance of power between liberals and conservatives in America.

All this was accomplished with modest financial resources—amazingly modest when compared with the spending of their liberal counterparts. In one recent year, the five leading liberal philanthropic organizations—the Ford, Rockefeller, and MacArthur foundations, the Pew Trusts, and the Carnegie Corporation—reported combined assets of \$24 billion and annual expenditures of \$1.2 billion. By contrast, the combined assets of the five largest conservative foundations do not exceed \$1.5 billion, and their annual expenditures barely reach \$100 million. Yet they were able to achieve a great deal with focus and discipline, and by allying themselves with an unusually talented generation of writers and scholars.

THE NETWORK of publications, university programs, and research centers built from the 1970's onward will continue to wield influence in the years ahead. But, as I suggested at the outset, this phase of conservative philanthropy has now run its course—in part because it has done its work, in part because conditions have changed, and in part because some key donors are leaving the scene. In the decades ahead, new funders, now entering the field, will shape the next chapter of conservative philanthropy.

That next phase will necessarily be different from those that have gone before. For one thing, conservative philanthropy will likely be based more on individuals than has been the case till now. The prosperity of the past few decades, along with the success of conservative groups and ideas, has created a cohort of such individuals, few with enormous wealth but many prosperous enough to make significant gifts to conservative enterprises. At the same time, some conservative foundations—Olin preeminently among them—have spent themselves or intend to spend themselves out of business in accordance with their founders' wishes, and others have begun to shift their priorities.

The reason for this shift has to do with the fact that conservatism has become a governing philosophy, and governance leans toward the practical. This is a natural evolution in a movement that has assumed national responsibility, and that needs workable agenda items—school vouchers, personal retirement accounts, legal reform, elimination of the estate tax, and so forth—to propose and enact. In addition, various conservative donors have themselves become involved in promoting one or

another specific policy, and see the passing of a piece of legislation, or the implementation of a reform, as the most tangible measure of their success.

Does this mean that there is no longer a great need to sustain and renew the intellectual basis of conservatism? Hardly. The dynamism of American life, and the relentless competition between the political parties and among interest groups, forces every movement of ideas to test those ideas on a more or less continuous basis if it means to survive and flourish. One need only think of last fall's tribute to Galbraith and Schlesinger to be reminded of the precarious and temporary nature of intellectual influence.

Conservatism has accomplished this process of renewal more successfully than any of its competitors in the postwar period. This has been done not through an emphasis on policy so much as through

broader arguments about where we have been, where we ought to go, and what threats and obstacles stand in our way.

"Who owns the future?" Orwell asked. It is the great question of life and the great question of politics. Few will be persuaded to embrace conservatism only on the grounds that it promotes private social-security accounts or caps on liability awards. In the end—as we saw dramatically actualized in the national furor over the fate of a woman kept alive by a feeding tube in a Florida hospital—the fight over the future is cultural, and moral.

In this sense, Hayek and the neoconservatives have had it right all along: any movement, if it is to maintain or augment its influence, will need to wage an ongoing battle of ideas. To do so, conservatives, no less than liberals, will need the help of sympathetic philanthropists.

What Native Peoples Deserve

Roger Sandall

THE ROOSEVELT Indian Reservation in the Amazon rain forest is not a happy place. Last year, the Cinta Larga Indians slaughtered 29 miners there, and in October the Brazilian who was trying to mediate the conflict was murdered at a cash machine. Neither of these events represented anything new. The reserve, located 2,100 miles northwest of Rio de Janeiro, and named for Theodore Roosevelt when he visited Brazil in 1913, is also where a notorious massacre of Cinta Larga by rubber tappers took place in 1963; only one child in the village survived.

The immediate cause of the recent violence is not rubber but diamonds. The Roosevelt Indian Reservation may be sitting on one of the world's largest deposits, and no one wants to leave it in the ground—neither the Indians, nor the itinerant diggers (*garimpeiros*), nor the government. But, under present Brazilian law, no one is free to begin digging, either. And this brings us to the deeper cause of murder and mayhem in the region.

Under Brazil's constitution, the country's Indians are not full citizens. Instead, they are legal minors, with the status of a protected species. This has one singular benefit for the Indians: the twelve Cinta Larga responsible for last year's killing of 29

wildcat prospectors may enjoy immunity from prosecution and never face jail. But there is also a downside. As wards of the state, the Indians are denied the right to mine their own land.

As for outsiders, they must apply for permits to dig, and face endless bureaucratic delays that more often than not lead nowhere. The outcome is predictable: frustrated in their own wishes, and hard-pressed by the impatient diggers, Indians make private deals, which then go sour—and the shooting starts.

At issue here is not just the law; the law is itself the product of an idea, or a set of ideas, concerning certain underlying questions. What should be done about endangered enclave societies in the midst of a modern nation? Can they, or their land, or their minerals be cut off and preserved, frozen in time, pristine and inviolate, forever? Should they be?

THE MASSACRE of the Cinta Larga in 1963 gave rise to a Brazilian state inquiry that became known as the Figueiredo Report (after the official in charge of the investigation). The inquiry was meant to find out about the shockingly grave deficiencies and abuses that were then being tolerated by the Indian Protection Service, including the use of individual Indians as slaves. Once it was completed, the old agency was closed down, and a new one created to replace it.

There the matter might have rested had not the London *Sunday Times* caught a whiff of scandal.

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The paper dispatched the travel writer Norman Lewis to Brazil; though he did not meet any Indians, he found all he needed in the Figueiredo Report. "By the descriptions of all who had seen them," Lewis reported, "there were no more in-offensive and charming human beings on the planet than the forest Indians of Brazil."

Having established a scene of primal innocence, Lewis proceeded to tell of the atrocities against the Cinta Larga, warning that they were being pushed to the brink of extinction and that there might not be a single Indian left by 1980. He concluded: "What a tragedy, what a reproach it will be for the human race if this is allowed to happen!" Reprinted all over the globe, his sensational article had profound and lasting effects.

The first of these effects was to enshrine a form of extreme protectionism, not only as a temporary means to an end—the human and cultural survival of the indigenous peoples of Brazil—but as an end in itself. Soon, all those working for Indian interests were of a single opinion: the only way to protect these tribal peoples was to create inviolable sanctuaries where they would "live their own lives preserving their own culture on their own land."

The second effect was to galvanize a number of English explorers, writers, and anthropologists into setting up a permanent international lobby. The name of this flourishing body is Survival, self-described as "the world's leading organization supporting tribal peoples." Two men who have been associated with it from the outset are John Hemming and Robin Hanbury-Tenison.

Hemming, who served for two decades as the director of the Royal Geographical Society, has written a number of books about South America, among them an indispensable three-volume history of the impact of civilization on Brazil's indigenous peoples—*Red Gold*, *Amazon Frontier*, and *Die If You Must*, the last of which appeared in 2003.* Hanbury-Tenison, Hemming's long-time friend, was also a founder of Survival and is today its president. Less well-known but also important is the documentary filmmaker Adrian Cowell, who has spoken up on behalf of the Amazonian Indians for nearly 50 years.

According to a recent article by Hemming in the British monthly *Prospect*, the campaign to ensure the survival of the Amazonian peoples appears to have succeeded. This is also the gist of the final chapter of *Die If You Must*, where he wrote:

The Indians will survive physically. Their populations have grown steadily since a nadir of

near-extinction in the mid-20th century. Having fallen to little more than 100,000 in the 1950's, they have more than tripled to some 350,000 and are generally rising fast.

The health of the Indians is basically good, Hemming reported in *Die If You Must*. The killers of yesteryear—measles, TB, pneumonia, cholera, and smallpox—are rare. Their land is also secure: "a remarkable 11 percent of the land-mass of Brazil is now reserved for Indians. The 587 indigenous areas total almost 260 million acres—an area greater than France, Germany, and Benelux combined." Environmentalist ideals and indigenous interests have been reconciled: "From the air, [one reservation] now stands out as an immense rectangle of verdant vegetation framed by the dismal brown of arid ranch-lands."

IT WAS in the 1950's and 60's that Hemming, Hanbury-Tenison, and Cowell, three young men from Oxford and Cambridge, launched themselves on the world. They were talented and energetic, they had good connections, and above all they shared a boyish taste for adventure. At Eton they probably read about Lawrence of Arabia; at Oxford, where Hemming and Hanbury-Tenison roomed together, they already knew that "exploring" was what they wanted to do most. They regarded the rain forests of Brazil as a natural field for their endeavors, and in no time they were paddling up the Amazon in canoes.

Adrian Cowell was a Cambridge man, and his precocity as an explorer makes an impressive tale in itself. As a student in 1954 he joined a university Trans-Africa Expedition. The following year he was in Asia. Then, as he relates in *The Heart of the Forest* (1961), "the Oxford and Cambridge Expedition to South America . . . brought me to the Amazon forest." Thereafter he joined the Brazilian Centro Expedition, an enterprise associated with the creation of the new national capital of Brasilia. Its purpose was "to canoe down the Xingu River and burn an airstrip at the exact geographical center of Brazil."

It was all tremendous fun and very romantic—a word that occurs spontaneously in the books of Hanbury-Tenison, who has written voluminously about his explorations and today runs a booking agency for exotic locations. Here, from his website, is a typical passage about an early adventure in Afghanistan:

* Macmillan, 887 pp., \$28.50 (paper).

A sound like distant thunder made me look up at the rich blue cloudless sky before I turned to see twenty wild horsemen in turbans and flowing robes bearing down on me. They carried long-barreled rifles and had daggers in their belts. Beside their spirited horses loomed large, hairy hounds. With their Genghis Khan moustaches and fine, aquiline noses they were almost caricatures of the bandits we had been warned about. I should have been frightened, but all I could think was that if I had to go I could not have found a more romantic end.

This tells us quite a bit about the attitude of all three men toward indigenous peoples. In light of that attitude, Hanbury-Tenison must have been taken aback when, in 1971, he called on the anthropologist Margaret Mead at the Museum of Natural History in New York to tell her about Survival International (as Survival was then called), and she gave him a piece of her mind. Mead at the age of seventy was a very different person from the idealistic young woman who had visited Samoa in 1926. By 1971, she was fiercely *unromantic*, and the spectacle of yet another young Oxford "explorer" embarking on yet another expedition up the Amazon must have set her teeth on edge. With sturdy good sense she tried to talk him out of his fantasies.

In his 1973 book, *A Question of Survival*, Hanbury-Tenison describes this "small, beady-eyed dumpling of a lady who sailed into the attack as I came through the door":

The main point that annoyed [Mead] was the concept, unstated by me, that primitive peoples were any better off as they were. She said she was "maddened by antibiotic-ridden idealists who wouldn't stand three weeks in the jungle" . . . and the whole "noble savage" concept almost made her foam at the mouth. "All primitive peoples," she said, "lead miserable, unhappy, cruel lives, most of which are spent trying to kill each other." The reason they lived in the unpleasant places they did, like the middle of the Brazilian jungle, was that nobody else would.

There was much talk in those days about the pharmaceutical benefits of rain forests, and Hanbury-Tenison and his friends were sure that the Amazon was about to make a huge contribution to the world's health. (This was a little before the discovery of the supposed wonders of jojoba oil.) But Mead was having none of it:

She said that to protect [the Indians] on the

grounds that they could be useful to us or contribute anything was nonsense. "No primitive person has *ever* contributed *anything*, or ever will," she said. She had no time for suggestions of medical knowledge or the value of jungle lore.

The only grounds on which Mead relented were broadly humanitarian. For one thing, the Indians' "art, culture, dancing, music, etc. was pleasant and attractive and their grandchildren might thank us for trying to preserve or at best record it now that we have the proper technical means [i.e., tape and film] for doing so." For another thing, "it was bad for the world to let these people die, and the effort to prevent their extermination was good for mankind even if it failed."

For the rest, however, Mead vehemently denied that the Indians

had any special reasons for being protected, as she denied any advantage of one race over another. She also claimed emphatically that they all wanted one thing only, and that was to have as many material possessions and comforts as possible. Those still running away in the jungle were the ones who had encountered the most unpleasant savagery from Europeans, and even though they might be having no contact now, if they could possibly get hold of any aluminum pots they would use them.

ALTHOUGH FAITHFULLY recorded by Hanbury-Tenison, Mead's argument was as lost on him in 1971 as it is lost today on legions of like-minded people who teach or mouth the slogans of multiculturalism. What Mead herself failed to grasp was that, naive though he may have sounded, Hanbury-Tenison and his friends had been radicalized, and they were never going to accept her bleak view of the tribal world. It was not that they had been reading Marx; instead, they had been reading Norman Lewis's digest of the worst parts of the Figueiredo Report, including Figueiredo's judgment that "the Indians [had] suffered tortures similar to those of Treblinka and Dachau."

Torture, indeed, was too tame a word for what had taken place. In 1963, there had been massacres of the Cinta Larga tribe in Rondonia. One gunman's taped testimony describes how an employee of a rubber company named Chico Luis

gave the chief a burst with his tommy gun to make sure, and after that he let the rest of them have it. . . . [A]ll the other guys had to do was finish off anyone still showing signs of life. . . . [T]here was a young Indian girl they didn't

shoot, with a kid of about five in one hand, yelling his head off. . . . Chico shot the kid through the head with his .45 and then grabbed hold of the woman—who by the way was very pretty. “Be reasonable,” I said, “why do you have to kill her?” In my view it was a waste. “What’s wrong with giving her to the boys? They haven’t set eyes on a woman for six weeks. Or we could give her as a present to [their boss] de Brito.”

But Chico would not listen:

He tied the Indian girl up and hung her head downward from a tree, legs apart, and chopped her in half right down the middle with his machete. Almost with a single chop I’d say. The village was like a slaughterhouse. He calmed down after he’d cut the woman up, and told us to burn down all the huts and throw the bodies into the river.

This is unbearable: but it is not essentially different from what had happened to many Indians in Latin America after 1492. The lawless frontier was for centuries a refuge for loners, criminals, and violent psychopaths who had nothing to lose and could act with impunity. Those who went searching for El Dorado in the 1540’s behaved like packs of marauding wolves, seizing food from the same Indian villagers whom they then enslaved as porters, and who were tortured or killed when they failed to cooperate. As one learns from Hemming’s three-volume work, this sort of thing has had a very long history indeed.

Colonial nations fashion their heroes from the timber at hand, much of which is twisted and full of knots. Australia, for example, invites its citizens to admire an unappealing Irish bandit named Ned Kelly. But the Kellys smell sweet alongside Brazil’s much romanticized *bandeirantes*. What are often referred to as expeditions of “pathfinders” from São Paulo into the interior in the first half of the 17th century were mostly slave raids aimed at catching, chaining, and marching back to the coast as many Indians as a group of well-armed and ruthless men could seize.

To be sure, there was sometimes a genuinely exploratory aspect to such forays. In *Red Gold*, Hemming offers a balanced account of this phase of Brazilian expansion inland, and fairly describes the ordeals of the *bandeirantes* themselves. Since slave-raiding was a central feature of traditional Indian culture, too, the journeys engaged whites, Indians, and those of mixed ancestry (*mamelucos*) in a common enterprise:

The Indians contributed their forest skills and geographical knowledge. They soon grasped the purpose of the mission and became expert enslavers of other natives. Although brutalized and worked hard by the captains of the *bandeiras*, the Indians probably enjoyed service on them. It was quite normal for Tupi warriors to make long marches through the forests to attack enemy tribes.

IN THE course of his own periodic visits to Brazil, Adrian Cowell appears to have come rather closer to the realities of Amazonian Indian life than either Hanbury-Tenison or Hemming. As a result, although aware of the horrors long endured by Indians at the hands of slavers, settlers, and frontier psychopaths, he was also more prepared to face up to the grimmer aspects of the native cultures themselves, and of the horrors Indians had long inflicted on each other.

In *The Heart of the Forest* (1961), Cowell writes in idyllic prose of the partnership he formed with an Indian hunter, carrying his friend’s gun and studying his craft, teaching himself to decoy wildfowl by imitating their calls. But he also reports how, in 1958 on the Xingu River, there were continual killings of itinerant Brazilian rubber tappers (*seringueiros*) by Indians, and of Indians by *seringueiros*. A Juruna Indian told him how

first we lived lower down the Xingu and worked for the *seringueiros*, but they killed many [Indians] with rifles. So we came up here past the great rapids and lived till the *seringueiros* say they are friends and gave us rifles. So we went downriver again and worked for the *seringueiros* till they killed more Juruna. Then we killed many *seringueiros* and came back here and killed Trumai and Kamayura Indians. Then the Txukahamae tribe came and killed almost all of us so that we are only twelve now.

That is the way things were and always had been. And this, too, was a seemingly ineradicable aspect of the culture that Cowell thought worthy of being saved. Back in 1967, he had joined the brothers Claudio and Orlando Villas-Boas in an attempt to contact and “pacify” the elusive Kreen-Akrore. But violence in the camp was making it hard to manage a community where different tribal groups had been brought together for their own safety. The captions on a page of photographs in Cowell’s 1973 book, *The Tribe that Hides from Man*, read like the list of casualties on some exotic war memorial: “Above: Javaritu, a Trumai killed by

Tapiokap. Above: Pionim, a Kayabi, killed Tapiokap to avenge his brother-in-law." And so on.

Much has been written about the endeavor of the Villas-Boas brothers to establish the Xingu Indian refuge and entice the tribal remnants of the Kayabi or Txikao or Suyá to join it. A passage from *The Tribe that Hides from Man* offers a glimpse into the thought processes of Claudio, a "Marxist philosopher" in the Latin American manner:

Look around this camp and you will see Indians are more loving than we are. But the expression of their love is confined to the limits of this society. They cut a hole in the wilderness to contain their family, but outside this camp is the jungle where they kill meat for food, bamboo for arrows, leaves for their beds. Killing is the essence of forest existence, and if you stopped it, the forest and the Indian would die. Within the Indian mind there is a complete division between the duties within the group and the absence of duty in the land of killing outside.

At one time, Claudio suggested that Indians should feel free to kill white *seringueiros* or any other uninvited marauders who came into the Xingu Park. While warning them of the inevitable costs of this practice as a permanent way of life, he understood that, according to the tribal code, revenge killing was natural, habitual, and inevitable. Nor was this the only aspect of Amazonian Indian culture that was hard to reconcile with modern life. Strict rules of seclusion were found among all the upper-Xingu tribes. Women were subjected to draconian punishments for violations of taboo. In a British television documentary from the 1970's, a young Mehinacu woman was asked what would happen if she were to glimpse, even accidentally, the sacred flutes played by the men. She would be gang-raped, she replied, smiling sadly as if in recognition that in the genteel world of her white interviewer, such sexual punishments—culturally authorized, approved, indeed mandatory—were unthinkable.

HEMMING'S ACCOUNT of Amazonian life is hard on the efforts of Christian missionaries, and especially hard on Jesuits ("fanatical missionaries intent on replacing native society and beliefs with their own Christian model"). One line of grudging appreciation will be followed by the word "but" and ten lines of disparagement. As his impressive study proceeds from volume to volume, he is consistently severe, his language becomes more tendentious, and an austere secularism dictates his

judgment of religious matters. In his recent article in *Prospect*, he seems to approve wholeheartedly only of the politically radical priests who began to appear in the 1960's—"trained anthropologists who did not try to undermine indigenous beliefs and ceased to be aggressive proselytizers." Before that point, his view of Catholic missionary activity is mainly negative.

But what exactly were the religious authorities to do when they first arrived from Portugal and had to deal, for example, with the Tupinamba? Did they not have a clear obligation both to undermine and to prohibit certain indigenous beliefs? In modern times, we have seen the rise of whole political cultures gripped by pathology, with hideous consequences; so, too, sick ethnic cultures evolved historically in the tribal world. Few quite so sick as the Tupinamba have been recorded before or since.

They loved human flesh. Prestige and power centered on the ritual slaughtering of prisoners. In an account prepared by Alfred Métraux for the Smithsonian's *Handbook of South American Indians* (1948), we read that the killing and eating of these prisoners (who were fattened for the purpose) "were joyful events which provided these Indians with the opportunity for merrymaking, aesthetic displays, and other emotional outlets." Métraux then describes what took place at a cannibal feast after the victim's skull was shattered:

Old women rushed to drink the warm blood, and children were invited to dip their hands in it. Mothers would smear their nipples with blood so that even babies could have a taste of it. The body, cut into quarters, was roasted on a barbecue, and the old women, who were the most eager for human flesh, licked the grease running along the sticks. Some portions, reputed to be delicacies or sacred, such as the fingers or the grease around the liver or heart, were allotted to distinguished guests.

That Portuguese settlers in the 16th century did not cope very well with this aspect of the Indian tribal world is probably true. That the missionaries who came after them did not handle the situation as they might have done is also likely. But if they had been around at the time, would John Hemming, or Robin Hanbury-Tenison, or Adrian Cowell, or the entire staff of *Survival* have done much better? Would any of us?

"All primitive peoples," Margaret Mead had said to her young Oxford visitor, "lead miserable, unhappy, cruel lives, most of which are spent trying to kill each other." She was overdoing it, but she

had a point—a point largely lost sight of in today's systematic sentimentalizing of the Stone Age.

OF COURSE, as we have seen, Mead also acknowledged that certain aspects of Indian culture—"their art, culture, dancing, music, etc."—deserved to survive, for the enjoyment of the people themselves and for the admiration of humanity as a whole. That, indeed, is more or less what has happened today in the Xingu Park and places like it elsewhere. On display in such places is a pacified, defanged, and somewhat feminized version of Amazonian culture, of the kind that middle-class travelers from the West like to see: a theatrical world where dressing-up in feathered regalia, ritual ceremonies, and communal dancing never stop.

Hemming, who welcomes the prospect of self-determination, claims that "modern indigenous policy seeks to empower tribes to manage their own affairs." Yet both self-determination and empowerment imply literacy and modern education; and here the picture is less clear. Officially, the children are learning to read and write, and in the last chapter of *Die If You Must*—a chapter with the title "Present and Future"—Hemming makes three rather perfunctory references to schooling. But at the same time, he strongly implies that in his vision of the future it does not matter whether the children learn to read and write or not, because others will be there to do things for them.

Who are these others? According to Hemming, the external political affairs of the Indians on the Xingu reserve are "supported by a remarkable contingent of 33 non-government organizations, a tireless band of missionaries, anthropologists, well-wishers, journalists, doctors, and lawyers, both in Brazil and abroad." As for their internal welfare, that is served by a "resident tribe of whites, composed of social scientists, doctors, teachers, nurses, biologists, and agronomists from all parts of Brazil." With friends like these, who needs self-determination?

What Hemming is describing is the fruit of the inviolable-sanctuary approach to cultural survival. This rests on what might be called fortress theory, and has two cardinal principles: that "culture" and "people" and "land" should be seen as indivisible, and that they can be kept this way forever in a suitably constructed territorial redoubt. Whatever is

happening in the world around them, ethnic cultures should, insofar as possible, be preserved unchanged. With the help of an army of administrative personnel, custodially responsible for seeing to it that they go on wanting only the same things they have always wanted, their heritage will be kept alive. Social change—at least as it affects these picturesque tribal peoples—is bad, and should be stopped.

Among the Xingu Park Indians, it is in fact safe to say that the older generation remains strongly attached to its remote lands, and intends to go on living there, hunting animals and gathering fruits. But what do younger Indians want to do with their lives? If there is one thing we have learned from modern history, it is that individuals often outgrow their ethnic cultures, find life in a fortress claustrophobic, and choose to move on. In contrast to museum exhibits, real human beings have a way of developing ideas and ambitions and desires—including for aluminum pots—beyond the ken of conservators. Fortress theory, multicultural "essentialism," and the enduring cult of the noble savage are the enemies of those ambitions and human desires.

In the final paragraph of *Die If You Must*, Hemming wonders uneasily whether the pessimists might have the last laugh after all—whether the Amazon's "beautiful, ancient, and intricate cultures will be maintained only artificially as curiosities for tourists, researchers, or politically correct enthusiasts." That is quite possible. But it is hardly the only undesirable possibility. Preserving ancient cultural patterns is laudable, but it is not enough. No society in history has ever stood still, and however beautiful, and ancient, and intricate traditional cultures may be, it is wrong to lock people up inside them and throw away the key. Uprooting the dishonest and patronizing Western cult of the noble savage will be the work of generations; but as far as today's Amazonian Indians are concerned, the main priority must surely be to ensure that those among them who do not want to play the obliging role of historical curiosities, endlessly dressing up for visitors whose expectations they feel bound to fulfill, are able to find something else to do in the modern world—on the reservation or off it. In that quest we can only wish them well.

My Uncle Simon

Hillel Halkin

IN *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, his highly praised novelistic memoir of a Jerusalem childhood and adolescence in the 1940's and 50's,* Amos Oz mentions my uncle, the Hebrew poet, novelist, and literary critic Simon Halkin.

My Uncle Simon was appointed in 1949 to head the department of Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, to which he moved from New York; until then, the position had been held by Oz's great-uncle Joseph Klausner, who vacated it for a chair in Second Temple studies. In his memoir, Oz records that in the late 1950's, his father Yehuda Arie Klausner, who was Joseph Klausner's nephew and a librarian with unfulfilled academic ambitions, sought, after receiving his doctorate from London University, "to secure a foothold in the literature department in Jerusalem as an outside lecturer." But the application was turned down. My uncle, Oz writes, had made "a fresh start [in the department] by eliminating the heritage, the methods, and the very smell of Klausner and certainly did not want to take on Klausner's nephew."

There are two other, briefer references to my Uncle Simon in Oz's book. One mentions him as the Hebrew translator of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The other lists a "Professor and Mrs.

HILLEL HALKIN, *who lives in Israel, is a columnist for the Jerusalem Post and the New York Sun, and a regular contributor to COMMENTARY. His new book, A Strange Death, will be published by Public Affairs in June.*

Halkin"—my uncle and my Aunt Minnie—among the condolence callers at the *shiva* for Oz's mother, whose suicide in 1951 forms the climax of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (the book jumps back and forth chronologically).

My aunt and uncle would not have had to walk far to the *shiva*, because they lived in Rehavia, the neighborhood of Jerusalem to which Oz's parents had moved a few years previously and in which many university faculty members—what Oz calls "the Rehavia intelligentsia"—resided. Gershom Scholem lived a few blocks away; Martin Buber, a few blocks in the other direction, across the border of Gaza Road, in the adjacent neighborhood of Talbia. Jerusalem was a small city, further diminished by its physical division into hermetically separated Arab and Jewish halves, and Rehavia, which is now at its center, was then at its western edge. With its quiet, tree-lined streets and small, stone-faced apartment houses, it was a pleasantly middle-class area—keeping in mind, that is, that Israel's middle class was in those years its upper class and lived in what might today be considered lower-class conditions. My Uncle Simon's apartment was dark and had four rooms plus a tiny kitchen, a little washroom, and a separate, cramped toilet that smelled of the matches lit by my aunt in place of deodorizer.

* Translated by Nicholas de Lange, Harcourt, 544 pp., \$26.00. I wrote about the Hebrew edition of this book in "Politics and the Israeli Novel," *COMMENTARY*, April 2004.

Oz's "Uncle Joseph" was an exception. His residence in Talpiyot, then in the far south of the city, was a private house that, at a time "when the whole of Jerusalem was cramped into one-and-a-half or two-bedroom flats," struck the young Amos as a "mansion" fit for a "sultan" or a "Roman emperor." Over its front door hung "a fine brass plate" with the motto, "Judaism and Humanism." Its library, with 25,000 volumes in "Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, classical and modern Greek, Sanskrit, Latin, medieval Arabic, Russian, English, German, Spanish, Polish, French, [and] Italian," plus "languages I had never even heard of, like Ugaritic or Slovene, Maltese or Old Church Slavonic" seemed like "the antechamber of some palace of wisdom."

My Uncle Simon's library, in the back room of his apartment, was far smaller and had only seven or eight languages—none, except perhaps for the classical Greek he had taught himself, on the order of Ugaritic or Maltese. Yiddish was the language of his White Russian childhood; Hebrew had been drilled into him by his father, a *heder* teacher; Aramaic came with the Talmud lessons that followed later; Russian was picked up from the Gentile neighbors; English was learned in America, to which the family emigrated on the eve of World War I; and German . . . but what shtetl-born Jew could not master German (which was, as Jews joked, merely badly spoken Yiddish) in a few hours by putting his mind to it?

SUCH POLYGLOTS were not unusual among Jewish scholars who had had the head start of an Eastern European childhood. Oz writes that his father could "cite lines of poetry in ten languages." My own father, Abraham Halkin, my uncle's younger brother, an Arabist and professor of medieval Jewish philosophy, knew languages I didn't know he knew. Although I was aware, for instance, that he could read Spanish along with a dozen other European and Semitic tongues, I had never heard him speak it and had no reason to think he could. Yet a year or two before his death from Alzheimer's disease, when his mind was already destroyed, an Argentinian gerontologist who examined him told me he had enjoyed the visit greatly because he had not heard such beautiful Spanish—*un castellano tan puro*—in years.

Of course, the Eastern European shtetl, which was looked back on without affection by most Jews who had left it, offered no courses in Spanish. Yet, if born elsewhere and educated differently, men like this would not have become what they did. The onerous schooling that subjected them as

small boys to dawn-to-dusk days in the classroom taught them what Yiddish calls *zitzfleysb*, the ability to concentrate on a text for long hours; trained their memories to perform athletic feats; and stocked them with a wealth of Jewish knowledge that they retained after turning to secular studies. My father, who had been required by his father to read extracurricularly, every night before going to bed, five chapters of the Bible, which he thus went through book by book many times in the course of his childhood, had the lifelong ability, as uncanny as a mind-reader's, to finish any biblical verse whose first half was read aloud to him.

The accomplishments, starting with the late 19th century, of the Eastern European Jewish mind, honed to a fine edge by the endlessly repetitive study of the same religious books and then let loose from its confinement in the schools and universities of Europe and America, comprise one of the great intellectual stories of modernity. Important scientific discoveries and great works of literature and the other arts form only a part of it. Within the space of two generations, Jews like Joseph and Yehuda Arie Klausner, who studied in Odessa and Heidelberg and in Vilna respectively, or like my father and uncle, who went to high school and college in New York, passed from a Jewish cloister to the domain of universal culture where they applied themselves to Homer and Virgil, Dante and Goethe, as assiduously as if they were sacred texts. For those among them who at the same time remained loyal to the world of their fathers, if not in outward observance then in inner identity, the synthesis of "Judaism and Humanism" was an existential imperative.

Many such men found that synthesis in Zionism, which they felt so strongly about because it was their way of remaining whole within themselves. "To absorb alien culture and turn it into our own national flesh and blood," Oz quotes Joseph Klausner as writing, "is the ideal I have fought for most of my life." Both Klausners were ardent supporters of another polyglot, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founder and leader of the right-wing Revisionist party. Uncle Joseph even ran unsuccessfully in 1948, against Chaim Weizmann, as the Right's first candidate for president of the state of Israel.

The Zionism of my Uncle Simon, who had lived in Tel Aviv in the 1930's and returned to America until his invitation to Jerusalem (where my father also settled upon his retirement in 1970), was less partisan. Yet, an emotional man, he could be just as passionate about it. I once heard

him say: "If I had known how all this would turn out, I'd have gone to North Dakota and lived as a Red Indian!"

THIS WAS in the early 1980's. In those days, I sometimes accompanied my father on Saturday mornings to the Conservative synagogue on Agron Street, in which he was the regular Torah reader—a task he had previously performed for decades at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. On our way back from services we often stopped at my uncle's apartment, which lay on our route.

My Uncle Simon never went to synagogue, not even on the High Holy Days. He read the Torah on his own. If we were the first to arrive, we would find him, a yarmulke on his head, still bent over a Bible with its commentaries, studying the weekly portion—which this Sabbath was *B'shalach*, the installment of Exodus telling of the crossing of the Red Sea and the miracle of the manna in the desert. However, today we were not the first. As I recall (like Oz in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, I have here and there allowed imagination to come to the aid of memory), while waiting in the ground-floor hallway for my aunt to open the door, we heard voices arguing inside. One belonged to my uncle; the other, to his upstairs neighbor Ezra Fleischer, who taught medieval Hebrew poetry at the university.

On a coffee table in the living room my aunt, an indifferent housekeeper, had put out the refreshments for the usual Saturday-morning guests: a plate with some disassembled squares of milk chocolate, a bowl of salty, doughnut-shaped biscuits, and a bottle of 777 Carmel brandy. "Nu, Avreml," my uncle said to my father by way of greeting, picking up the bowl in one hand and the brandy in the other, "which of these is an *ashisha*?"

"The bottle, the bottle," Fleischer said impatiently, as if the argument should have been settled by now.

In perusing the Aramaic version of Exodus attributed to Yonatan ben Uziel, which describes the manna in the desert as being like *zera kusbar beyovar ve-ta'amei ka-ashishin b'dvash*, "white coriander seed tasting like wafers with honey," it had occurred to my Uncle Simon that the word for "wafer," *ashisha*, which also designated a drinking vessel, might be a suitable equivalent for the Greek *krater*, a wine bowl, in a satiric dialogue of Lucian's that he happened to be translating. Fleischer, an Orthodox Jew, disagreed. "It's in the tractate of *Shabbat*," he pointed out, citing a passage in the Babylonian Talmud, "that you mustn't remove a cloth plug from

an *ashisha* on the Sabbath because you might perform forbidden work by squeezing liquid from it. How can you plug a bowl?"

"Ezra, Ezra!" my uncle retorted. "Think of your medieval poetry. *Ve'hashkeni yeshisha ba'ashisha*, Shmuel Hanagid says: pour me some old wine in an *ashisha*—not from it!"

"Who drinks wine from a bowl?" asked Gentilla Broyde, who was there with her husband Ephraim, the editor of the literary periodical *Moznayim*.

"Brush up your Shakespeare, Gentilla," Broyde said to her. "Give me a bowl of wine./I have not that alacrity of spirit,/Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have."

"Macbeth?" Gentilla asked.

"Richard the Third," my uncle corrected her. "Greek wine was such rotgut that it had to be mixed with water in a bowl—*kratera kerannunai*—before serving."

"Speaking of rotgut, I'll have some more *yashisha*," Fleischer said, reaching for the brandy while punning on the Hebrew word for it, *yash*.

"A clever Jew, Lucian," said my uncle.

"What Jew?" my father protested. "A Syrian."

"Oho! You too, Avreml? A Syrian who laughed at every god and religion in the Roman Empire except one?" My uncle tapped his shut Bible. "About that one, not a word. A Syrian? A clever Jewboy from Syria-Palaestina!"

These conversations could continue, while the brandy bottle emptied, for an hour or more, caroming off languages, texts, authors, and subjects, from the weekend papers to the sonnets of Petrarch and the Hebrew poet Emmanuel of Rome, like a dizzying game of billiards. This was a period of my uncle's life when, retired from teaching and dark with grievance against old acquaintances and students for having (as he thought) abandoned him, he saw his circle of Sabbath visitors shrink. Besides Fleischer and the Broydes, there was the writer Yudka Ya'ari, who sometimes entertained us with stories of working on road gangs in the Valley of Jezreel, or as a kibbutz shepherd, in his pioneering days in Palestine. The poet Dan Pagis and his wife sometimes dropped in, too. Ya'ari, a small man with a sweet, shy smile, had a library with a large collection of hasidic literature, and he and my uncle liked to swap hasidic tales.

ON SATURDAY mornings in Jerusalem, men met like this in hundreds of apartments. On their way back from synagogue, their prayer-shawl bags beneath their arms, they stopped by friends and neighbors for *kiddush*, ate a cookie or a piece of

honey cake, and chatted before going home to their Sabbath lunch. Amos Oz, too, remembers Sabbath gatherings at his uncle's, to which he and his parents took the long walk from one end of Jerusalem to the other. Uncle Joseph's guests, though, arrived in the afternoon, after their Sabbath nap, and the famous scholar presided over the table like a *rebbe* at *sholosh siddes*, talking, as Oz describes it, "in his reedy, feminine voice . . . about the state of the nation, the status of writers and scholars, [and] the responsibilities of cultural figures" while his guests "listened in respectful silence, or expressed agreement in a few quiet words, so as not to interrupt the flow of his lecture."

The atmosphere at my Uncle Simon's was different. That particular morning, my uncle and Yudka Ya'ari became embroiled in a dispute over the relative merits of the Polish Hasidism of Kotsk and the White Russian school of Habad, or Lubavitch, in which my uncle and father had been raised. When my uncle declared that, philosophically, Habad remained Hasidism at its most profound, Ya'ari remarked scornfully (the Lubavitchers, while not yet openly swept by messianic fever, had already taken to the streets in those days to hector Jews to hasten the Redemption by donning phylacteries):

"A corporation of *tefillin* salesmen!"

"Let them hire Yonah Wallach," Gentilla Broyde suggested.

Wallach, a talented poet, had just caused a scandal by publishing a poem called "*Tefillin*" in a literary magazine. She had written there:

Put *tefillin* on me
Bind my arms with them
Play them over me
Pass them deliciously over my body
Rub me hard with them
Excite me everywhere
Make me pass out from the feeling
Pass them over my clitoris
Tie them around my hips
So I come quickly

"*Shmutz*," my uncle declared.

"But what's wrong with it?" Ezra Fleischer asked. "Isn't that what we wanted: Judaism and Humanism?"

"Where's the Judaism? Where's the humanism?"

"And when Shlonsky wrote in the 1920's, 'The roads we pave wrap the land like *tefillin* straps,' that was Judaism? That was humanism?"

"Don't compare Shlonsky to Wallach!" My uncle was getting worked up. "You might as well compare the Italian Renaissance to the French deca-

dents. The only difference is that it took Europe 500 years to go from one to the other and our Jewish brain has done it in 50. Shlonsky may have been a man of the Left, but his cultural vision was the same as Klausner's. And Klausner, my friend, was an innocent. We all were. Who knows that Kurzweil won't have the last laugh? I tell you, if I had known how all this would turn out, I'd have gone to North Dakota and lived as a Red Indian!"

I DON'T KNOW whether my Uncle Simon ever reached North Dakota or saw Red Indians there. He wandered a good deal in America when he was young, taking with him, he once told me, a few books and a violin that he played badly, and he even got as far as California. There he wrote a long Hebrew poem, called "On the Beach in Santa Barbara," that ended:

God's song has fled. Only you, Earth, are left.
Consumed by you, blinded by you, I
surrender.

Your mountains, molten in the noonday heat,
Your ocean, primping in its quiet bays,
Have made me drunk, decanted in me
God-forgetfulness.

Am I to die in them, inebriate and swooning,
My stunned heart no longer hearing God's
high music?

The tone was Shelleyan, but the thematics came from Habad, that most dialectical of hasidic schools of thought. Nowhere more than in Habad was Hasidism perturbed by the chasm between a transcendent God and this world; nowhere more did it seek to bridge that chasm by teaching that the Infinite is revealed in every finitude, its dazzling light, too blindingly incommensurate to be apprehended directly by the human mind, dimmed there to a point of perceptibility. On the beach at Santa Barbara, his body offered to the semi-tropical sun (he had not yet been to Palestine, had never experienced such hot, bright sunlight before), my Uncle Simon had a contrarian thought: it was not the Infinite but the finite that was overwhelmingly brilliant. Our reflections on transcendence were a vain attempt to dream the shadows in which God could be made out.

He was a deeply religious poet, which lent an irony to Baruch Kurzweil's attacks on him.

Kurzweil—it was his "last laugh" that my uncle had feared that Saturday morning of the portion of *B'shalach*—was a Hebrew literary critic, a German Jewish intellectual who settled in Palestine in 1939 and died in Tel Aviv, a suicide, in 1972. For much

of that period, in articles and books, and above all, in his *Our Modern Hebrew Literature: Continuity or Revolution?* (1958), he scathingly took the Israeli literary establishment to task for living in a Zionist self-deception.

This self-deception did not begin, Kurzweil wrote, with my uncle's generation. It went back to the beginnings of secular Zionism and its seminal thinker, the Russian Jewish essayist Ahad Ha'am (1856-1926); was handed down by followers like Joseph Klausner, Ahad Ha'am's disciple in Odessa and successor as editor of *Ha-shiloah*, the influential literary journal founded by him; and was still being taught by men like my Uncle Simon—who, far from "eliminating Klausner's heritage" in the Hebrew-literature department in Jerusalem, was its devoted propagator.

It was Ahad Ha'am who, starting in the late 1880's, had first programmatically addressed the question of a secular Jewish culture. Criticizing Theodor Herzl and the "political Zionists" for simplistically assuming that (apart from having Judaism as its official religion) a Jewish state would be no different from any other modern European country, Ahad Ha'am argued that such a state would be an empty shell unless its inhabitants lived culturally Jewish lives.

But how could there be a secular Jewish culture when Jews had always been defined by their religion? Ahad Ha'am answered that the secularization of Jewish life was not the abandonment of Jewish identity but the rescuing of it. The essential point, he maintained, was that Judaism, far from having created the Jews, had been created by them as a medium for expressing their "national self" in a religious stage of human development. In the post-religious age of modernity, this self would vanish—unless, like that of other modern peoples, it were to take the form of a collective "we" based on such components as unique historical memories, literary creations, intellectual achievements, social mores and folkways, and so forth. The Hebrew language and the land of Israel, Ahad Ha'am held, were the formal framework that the "national self" would fill with Jewish content.

"Ahad Ha'amists" like Klausner did not consider themselves anti-religious. On the contrary, they harbored warm feelings for tradition and believed it to be the necessary matrix for a secular Jewish culture to grow in. The absorption of its nutrients, as it were—the literature, legends, folklore, customs, values, and attitudes of Judaism—would not take place overnight. But just as when, in a forest, more competitive trees replace older ones, doing so

gradually in a soil enriched by decay, so in Palestine the new Hebrew culture would feed off its vanishing predecessor until it could stand on its own. Indeed, this was happening already. Examples were everywhere, none more pithily illustrative than a short poem entitled "Toil" by a young pioneer named Abraham Shlonsky, who was to become one of modern Hebrew literature's major figures. Its first lines went:

Dress me, good Jewish mother, in a fine coat
of many colors

And lead me in early morning to my toil.

My land dons light like a prayer shawl.

Its houses are boxes of *tefillin*,

Its roads, paved by our hands, their flowing
straps.

A trim new city prays at dawn to its creator.

And among its creators am I—your son

Abraham,

A poet-builder in Israel.

EVERY WORD of this poem could be taken to demonstrate the secularization that Ahad Ha'am had in mind, starting with the opening appeal to the shtetl mother to offer up her son, dressed as lovingly as Joseph by Jacob, to his pioneering labors as once she brought him every morning to the *beder*. Nor could Shlonsky have written "Toil" in anything but Hebrew, or anywhere but in the land of Israel. In no other language would the reader have known that *oteh or*, "dons light," comes from the verse in Psalms, "O Lord my God Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty; Who donnest Thyself with light as with a garment." In no other land could the "trim new city" of secular Tel Aviv—*kiryah na'ah* in Shlonsky's Hebrew, this time echoing the Psalmist's epithet for Jerusalem, *kiryat melekh rav*, "the city of the great King"—be so audaciously yet naturally presented as the new Zion, or the "poet-builder" as its creator-god.

My Uncle Simon had good reason to be upset by Ezra Fleischer's comparison of "Toil" to Yonah Wallach's "*Tefillin*." Citing Shlonsky's poem in his *Modern Hebrew Literature* (1950), he had written:

Revaluating the longings of the Jewish past, and scanning the widening vistas of the new Jewish future, [contemporary] Hebrew literature cannot indeed read into the Palestinian present anything substantially different from the idea of sacredness, of continued self-perfection and self-purification which traditional

literature always regarded as the bridge across which Jewry must march, over whatever turbulent gulf, toward salvation. As interpreted by this literature, the glory of *balutziut* [Zionist pioneering] is not to be gauged by its physical achievement merely. It is rather to be measured in terms of the earnestness of purpose, of the self-dedication to the ideal which must evolve a code of *mitzvot*, of innerly prescribed and voluntarily fulfilled commandments.

My uncle's optimistic appraisal of modern Hebrew literature and culture as an organic evolution of the Jewish past was thoroughly Klausnerian. Although he may have come to the university in Jerusalem determined to make a "fresh start" based on Anglo-American rather than Eastern-European critical approaches, his own teaching of literature, which stressed its social more than its aesthetic aspects, was far closer to Klausner's than to I.A. Richards's or William Empson's. He was sincere when he said of Klausner, in addressing a memorial gathering for him after his death in 1958, that he was "my master and teacher from boyhood on."

Yet for Kurzweil, Klausner's literary Ahad-Ha'amism, of which he considered my uncle to be the leading contemporary representative, was intellectually fraudulent. The truth, Kurzweil insisted, was that secular Hebrew culture and literature were not a natural continuation of Jewish history but a radical break with it, one that Zionist critics had papered over for ideological reasons. Hebrew creations like "Toil" were glib works of sleight-of-hand, sentimental manipulations of religious symbolism. Although himself an observant Jew, Kurzweil took as his favorite early modern Hebrew writers either defiant radicals like Yosef Chaim Brenner and Micha Yosef Berdichevsky, who viewed Judaism as a millstone to be cast off ("We will either be the last Jews or the first Hebrews!" Berdichevsky had famously declared), or anguished souls unreconciled to their loss of religious faith like the poet Hayyim Nahman Bialik.

Kurzweil accused my uncle of fudging things. If one could not accept Jewish tradition on its own religious terms, one should do the honest thing and reject it. To want to have one's cake and eat it like the Ahad Ha'amists, abandoning Judaism while claiming to be its heir, and using the language of the sacred while denuding it of its transcendent justification, was gross hypocrisy. Moreover, Ahad Ha'am was wrong, said Kurzweil: Judaism was the defining mark of the Jewish people, and would continue to be so. In the long run,

there was no such thing as secular Jewishness. There was only the transient illusion of it, produced in Jews like Klausner and my uncle by an upbringing that had left them a fund of religious knowledge and emotions that could fungibly be spent elsewhere. Yet this was non-renewable capital, unreplenishable by secular means. Those who possessed it had not bequeathed it to the generations after them, whose own upbringing would leave them disinherited.

In the years in which Kurzweil conducted his polemic, I do not think that my uncle took it seriously. He was stung by its venom, true; but that could be put down to envy of him, the imported New Yorker, on the part of a man, Kurzweil, who, though he would ultimately land a position at Bar-Ilan University, was for many years forced to teach in a high school, denied, like Amos Oz's father, the academic job that he craved. (Until the 1950's, the Hebrew University was the sole higher institution for the liberal arts in Israel, making the academic job market extremely tight. This was the reason, too, that my father did not settle in Israel when his brother did.) In those years, Ahad Ha'amism was the regnant ideology in Israel. Although the writers and artists of the "Canaanite" movement of the 1950's had followed Berdichevsky in proclaiming the native-born *sabra* to be a new creation, a Middle-Eastern "Hebrew" distinct from the Diaspora Jew, they were little more than a bohemian coterie. Few Israeli intellectuals doubted that secular Jewish culture in Israel was a going concern.

Now, however, on a Sabbath morning in the early 1980's, my Uncle Simon declared: "Who knows that Kurzweil won't have the last laugh? If I had known how all this would turn out, I'd have gone to North Dakota and lived as a Red Indian!"

HE HAD by then reached old age. He had not lacked recognition or honors, and his ex-students, many now prominent literary figures themselves, always spoke of him highly even if he complained that they had forgotten him. Still, he was a melancholy man.

Much of this had to do with his personal life, which had been unhappy, especially in his marriage. Moreover, he felt recognized for the wrong things. His reputation was as a literary critic and educator; his poetry, dense and difficult, was read by few. Yet he had never liked to teach—to the very end of his career, he once told me, he could not face a class without feeling faint with anxiety—and he was a far better poet than critic.

In fact, his verse improved with age. It grew sim-

pler, more conversational; its Shelleyan prolixity turned terse and hard. Even the yearning of his Habad soul became more rugged. There is a poem of his from this period that I often return to. It begins with a scene: a man, the poet, is watching a winter sun set over a crag, which, "steep, ribbed, and black," makes him think of "a child's image of Sinai." The last light beckons; he hurries toward it, not wanting "to miss from close up what seemed a strange revelation,/The main fire in which had already gone out, leaving only/A last sliver of silver to sharpen the top of the crag." Yet, nearing it,

I could tell I was late. Only a stiff, cautious
squirrel
Still silvered intently. It climbed upward and
stopped, grew grayer and stopped,
Pressing on toward a gleam that shone for its
vision alone
As if tuned, it alone, to a gleaming I am of an
echo
That called from the top of the crag—to a
signal, not much higher than it was,
That flared for its vision alone.

But even this thought was denied me. The
squirrel froze suddenly
As if what it heard, too, the echo that called
from the cragtop,
Was lost all at once and forever.
Perhaps the snap of a branch in some hidden
bush made it freeze. Or perhaps
It had sniffed the despair of an unhearing man
and had hid from that man in a cleft—
All-hearing, all-knowing.

So there was that, too: a religious despair that was not perhaps total, for there was room in it for a creature, smaller than a man, that could still hear God's "I am."

It was during this period that my uncle read me a letter in Yiddish that he had received from a cousin of his, the last pious Habadnik in the family. The cousin had written:

All my life I have been a Habadnik, and now I am old and I still understand nothing. What, then, has Habad done for me? What it has done is to raise me from a lower level of understanding nothing to a higher level of understanding nothing.

Although this letter came from New York, it bore the spiritual postmark not of the messianic sect on Eastern Parkway but of White Russia—of the old Habad of the shtetl on the Dnieper with its

cunning irony or simple innocence, so gently amused by the divine folly of things that it hardly bothered to sing and dance as other Hasidim did, preferring its own calm, sober gaze to the fevers of ecstasy.

"Believe me," my uncle said, "when it comes to understanding nothing, I'm his equal."

He had begun to be afraid that perhaps Kurzweil was right after all.

THE 1970's in Israel were years in which the center fell away, splitting the country into two warring halves, a heavily secular Left and a heavily religious Right, that were no longer talking the same language. It was not just that one camp thought it crucial to keep the territories conquered in June 1967 while the other thought it crucial to give them up. It was that the justifications offered—the Bible, the land of Israel, the claims of history; democracy, human rights, the dictates of morality—came from two different realms of discourse. A particularism that jeered at universal values clashed with a universalism that scoffed at the particulars. It was as if, from the most superficial level of rhetoric to the deepest psychology of those using it, Judaism and humanism had become unglued.

No longer did men of the Left like Shlonsky and men of the Right like Klausner share the same cultural vision. Soon there would be no such men left at all. My uncle and Ezra Fleischer, one of whom never went to synagogue and one of whom went every week, lived in the same mental world. Their children did not. They had been raised differently, educated differently; they had gone their different ways. All the time that Ahad Ha'am was winning in Rehavia, Berdichevsky was stealing the Israeli street. And the street was illiterate: it spoke a wretched Hebrew, could not recall a verse from the Bible, went to the beach on Saturday mornings. Ahad-Ha'amism was indeed an illusion, the foolish belief in one's own immortality—in the assumption that what has come naturally to us will come naturally to those who come after us, never realizing that the circumstances that made us are gone.

It depressed my uncle greatly. "*Khnyokes* and *amarotzim*!" he once raged in my presence. "We've become a country of *khnyokes* and *amarotzim*!" Religious prigs and ignoramuses! A country of sanctimonious believers and vulgarian infidels! Yonah Wallach was just the last straw. On another day, he might have been the first to admit that she hadn't written a bad poem. Now, though, its taunting of the *tefillin* he had once donned in holiness brought

out all of his grief and revulsion. He had wasted his life on a mirage. He should have gone back out West instead of taking Klausner's job in Jerusalem, vanished there with his beloved Whitman:

A California song,
A prophecy and indirection, a thought
impalpable to breathe as air,
A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or
hamadryads departing,
A murmuring, fateful, giant voice, out of the
earth and sky,
Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood
forest dense!

Although I knew it was just one of his emotional outbursts, I couldn't pretend not to be shocked. His Zionism had always been a model for me.

I wanted to talk to him about it. I never did, though, because not long afterward he had a stroke, from which he never recovered his speech. Now and

then, until he died, in the years when my father's Alzheimer's was not yet severe, we still dropped in after synagogue to say hello. I would sit there wondering whether, seated blankly in the living room of his Rehavia apartment in which my aunt had placed him like a vase of flowers, my uncle heard anything of our conversation. I felt like saying:

"Nu, Reb Shimm! It's not as bad as all that. It takes a forest a long time to grow. For you it was Sinai, for Yonah Wallach *tefillin*. Isn't that the point— that as long as the God we don't believe in is the Jewish one, there's still hope?"

But my uncle seemed only to wink at me, like the dead Habadnik in a story he liked to tell (who, eulogized at his funeral for virtues he never had, wanted the rabbi to know he saw through him), while repeating:

"Oho! Don't be a clever Jewboy. If I had known how all this would turn out, I'd have gone to North Dakota and lived as a Red Indian!"

OBSERVATIONS

Love at the Multiplex

Algis Valiunas

MOVIES FOR adults—not to be confused with adult movies—are few and far between these days, so one is grateful when serious fare comes to the local multiplex. On the very serious and all-consuming topic of love and sex, the season just past featured three such movies: *Kinsey*, *Closer*, and *Sideways*. All three attracted a good deal of attention, were in the running for industry awards, and drew comment from critics impressed not only with their qualities as movies but with what they had to say about the way we live now.

Kinsey recounts the life of a man who became, for a spell, perhaps the most notorious figure in America, and certainly the most notorious professor of all time. As one learns from published biographies, Alfred C. Kinsey (1894-1956), the author of the best-selling volumes *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, presented himself as a model

of scientific detachment, a taxonomist who had examined and categorized the sexual proclivities of mankind as disinterestedly as he might the mating habits of the gall wasp—on which he had become a world expert during his earlier career as an entomologist.

But Kinsey's research was not without its moral lesson, which subsequent generations have absorbed into their very marrow—namely, the supreme value of diversity in sexual behavior as in other natural phenomena. As Kinsey professed to show, so many people were so kinky that the very idea of normality was a misconception, if not a pious fraud. The only perversions, he instructed, were abstinence, celibacy, and late marriage—though why he should have considered these to be perversions rather than further manifestations of diversity carries us into the murky region of his own personality and needs.

The movie, written and directed by Bill Condon, does venture into those depths, but chiefly it accepts Kinsey's own estimation of his moral heroism, explaining his peculiarities in that light. The princi-

pal malefactor in *Kinsey* is, in fact, normality, sucking the joy out of life, making people fear and despise their own natures, inevitably giving rise to hypocrisy. Early in the movie, as the adolescent Kinsey and a handsome comrade stand on the wooded shore of a lake—nature in its glory, fish spawning, sap rising—our young protagonist confesses that he sometimes gives in to untoward urges. The youths' Boy-Scout vows come to the rescue; the two of them kneel and pray the carnal demons away. In the next shot, Kinsey is seen masturbating in his sleeping bag as though going for the world's speed record.

Even more laughable than Boy-Scout morals is the mad piety of Daddy. Kinsey senior (played by John Lithgow, clearly enjoying himself) is an anti-sex maniac, raving against the zippered fly, which renders fornication all too easy. As his father lectures him on the evils of the flesh, young Kinsey listens impassively, or begins not to listen: rationality and skepticism are making their debut, and the future gleams on the horizon. Many years hence, the adult Kinsey (Liam Neeson) will

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even be able to forgive his father's demented religiosity upon learning that, at the age of ten, old Senior had been grotesquely punished by *his* parents for touching himself in unholy fashion.

WHAT HAS saved the adult Kinsey, and by extension the rest of us, is the combination of science and hot loving. As a twenty-seven-year-old researcher, cloddish, solitary, virginal, he has become Indiana University's foremost bug man when his student Clara McMillen (Laura Linney) decides she has to have him. Condon presents Kinsey and Clara as representative denizens of the biosphere, human animals enacting a mating ritual after the manner of the birds and the bees. When, after the marriage, nature proves cruel and the sex excruciating, the impediment (Clara's hymen is unusually thick) is soon taken care of by a little surgery and the sex turns delicious, abundant, and various.

Prok and Mac, as everyone calls them, are transfigured, and in time the professor sets out to share his newfound wizardry. Initiating a human-sexuality course for the edification of Hoosier youth, he embarks on his lifelong project of collecting sexual histories as he once did gall wasps. But he still has a lot to learn, which one of his graduate-student assistants, the pansexual Clyde Martin (Peter Sarsgaard), will teach him. Once Kinsey's latent bisexuality is activated, it blooms as luxuriantly as his beloved garden. Obliging, Martin fully activates Mac as well, who has been drifting into a sad sexual dormancy.

It is true that a wrench gets thrown in the works when, in line with Kinsey's teachings, his young assistants engage in some casual wife-swapping and one of the wives falls distressingly in love with her seducer. That is not supposed to happen: Kinsey has to separate his brawling acolytes, reminding them of their duty as scientists and moral trailblazers, bold and free

and non-judgmental. But in general Liam Neeson's Kinsey tends to be blissfully obtuse about the emotional rampaging his work sets off. Dying in 1956, he did not live to see its longer-term effects in society at large.

That works to the advantage of the director, for whom moral lucidity seems to be an exceptionally tricky business. Condon, who may be the foremost practitioner of the gay-uplift movie, has made a name by courting heterosexual sympathy for the homosexual and bisexual plight. His 1998 critical success, *Gods and Monsters*, was about the emotionally labyrinthine relationship between James Whale, a retired gay director of classic horror movies, and a hetero beefcake gardener. Like *Gods and Monsters*, *Kinsey* purports to show how heroically torturous it is to be homosexual, and how heroically decent to be accepting of sexual natures different from one's own.

In trying to make Kinsey appealing to mainstream audiences, however, Condon has had to enhance his protagonist's life, adding here, bowdlerizing there. Clyde Martin did not in fact seduce Kinsey; Kinsey seduced Martin, as one learns from James H. Jones's *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (1997). Condon has generally ignored Jones's severely critical work, basing his movie instead on Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's far more congenial *Kinsey: Sex the Measure of All Things* (1998); but on this point he departs even from Gathorne-Hardy. For him, the seducer *must* become the seduced, since we are supposed to see Kinsey as a sexual cripple, raised from victimhood by a benevolent touch just as his own work will raise legions of other victims. It would not do to depict Kinsey as man enough to go after what he wanted, especially when what he wanted was lots of sex, mostly with other men.

Among the types of sex that Kinsey wanted, some do not make it to

the screen at all. He was given to inserting foreign objects into his urethra, most notably a toothbrush, bristle end first. He would wrap a belt around his testicles and see how tightly he could pull it; once, he looped the belt around an overhead pipe and dangled there by his privates. Gathorne-Hardy acknowledges this, though he does not condemn Kinsey for it; Condon passes over it in silence. And who can blame him? The cause he advocates would hardly be well-served if one of its founding fathers were to prove a creep.

Which is not to say that *Kinsey* is simply sexual agitprop; there is just enough ambivalence about Kinsey's character and achievement to lend the film some moral interest. But it does not compare in intelligence with even so modestly accomplished a novel as T. Coraghessan Boyle's *The Inner Circle* (2004), which better comprehends the devastation that Kinsey's brand of sexology, infiltrated by his obsessive priapism and voyeurism, visited upon his devotees, and in later generations upon the very idea of love.

MIKE NICHOLS's *Closer* inhabits the world that Kinsey helped to make—the world in which everything sexual can be freely thought and spoken and acted on; and Nichols sees what this has done to the idea of love. Indeed, the movie, whose script was adapted by Patrick Marber from his hugely successful 1997 play, demonstrates what can happen when entrancing and anonymous encounters somehow *lead* to love.

The opening scene is brilliantly done. From the pedestrian multitudes of a London street the camera selects two beautiful people: a young man, played by Jude Law, looking drab and diffident in the English way, and a jaunty knockout, played by Natalie Portman, with carmine hair and a mien of waifish abandon. As the camera cuts from one to the other, it becomes apparent that they are advancing from

opposite directions, looking only at each other, and starting to smile as they come closer. Then shock ripples across the man's face, and we see the woman lying face down in the intersection, where a cab has hit her. The man goes to her aid. When she comes to, she says, with woozy allure, "Hello, stranger."

Their encounter causes a multi-car pileup and endless emotional carnage. The man and the woman, Dan and Alice, will of course become lovers, and will try to make a lasting connection out of their chance meeting; but they will remain strangers, and the distance between them will rage like a wound. A year later, Dan, now living with Alice, is about to publish a novel based on her life, which has included stripping in nightclubs. But then he falls in love, at first sight, with Anna (Julia Roberts).

An American like Alice, Anna is a photographer who is taking Dan's picture for the dust jacket. But, after meeting Alice and measuring the depth of her feeling for Dan, she fends off his extravagant importunities. Some months later, in a hilarious scene, Dan logs on to the website London SexAnon, pretends to be a nymphomaniac named Anna, and snares a dupe, Larry the dermatologist (Clive Owen). Larry duly goes to the London aquarium for an assignation and there meets . . . the real Anna, who has previously confided to Dan that she loves to go watch the fish. Larry and Anna of course fall in love, and marry. But in the meantime Anna has also fallen madly in love with Dan, and their affair wrecks both the marriage and Dan's romance with Alice.

That's just for starters. Betrayal and retribution ramify until everyone is raw and bleeding. Portman's Alice suffers most vividly, and Owen's Larry is most adept at dishing out malevolence. Their portrayals, which earned each of them an Academy Award nomination, are harrowingly alive; their erotic pow-

er—or rather the erotic power that controls them—glistens like a Doberman's bared teeth. By comparison, Law's Dan and Julia Roberts's Anna are emotionally drawn and pallid; little more than their looks and their status as *artistes* recommends them as objects of desire, and that barely suffices.

Closer SHOWS the savagery with which apparently decent people want what they want, and the desperation that follows when they fail to get it. What they want above all are maniacal sexual heat *and* the truest intimacy, which do not come readily in tandem. In Nichols's psychologically gruesome *Carnal Knowledge* (1971), an Amherst boy and a Smithie in the first flush of desire presume the supreme intimacy: "You know everything." "I know you." "I know you." In fact neither knows the first thing about the other, and their lovemaking will plunge them into an inescapable welter of deceit, manipulation, and loathing. *Closer* is Nichols's crueler and angrier updating of *Carnal Knowledge*.

Love's fall from innocence, brought on by the desire for true knowledge, is an old, old story, from which Marber constructs a very modern erotic theology. In a bizarre way, God Himself might be said to preside over Dan and Alice's meeting. On seeing that Alice was only slightly hurt, the cabbie (or so Dan tells her) said, "Thank fuck, I thought I'd killed her." The startling locution is more than a Mametism: under the new dispensation, sex is the Alpha and the Omega. Nor is this the only piece of religious allusion in Marber's screenplay. In the hospital waiting room after her accident, Alice eats an apple from Dan's backpack. Larry speaks of the initial rush of romance as paradise.

But paradise becomes ever grimmer as knowledge deepens, until it starts to look like hell. The men claw and tear at their women in or-

der to know what the women would prefer to conceal from them, and when the women tell, the men are undone. In the lovers' terrible infighting, the unspeakable is spoken again and again. When Anna tells Larry she is leaving him for Dan, he rips into her with laconic obscenity like a madman with a meat-axe; he needs to know every sexual detail, and she complies, wanly at first, then with gathering heat, subtle malice, even pleasure. Similarly, the strip joint where Larry happens upon Alice after the couples have split apart has rooms for private viewing called "paradise suites." In one of these, Alice strips for Larry—Portman stalks him like a tigress and struts like a majorette—but reveals nothing of herself. "What do you have to do to get some intimacy around here?" Larry howls at her and at the security camera on the ceiling. Like *Carnal Knowledge*, *Closer* demonstrates that carnal knowledge is not knowledge at all; it is rather an initiation into scalding doubt and an awful need for the kinds of truth that one would be better off not knowing.

THE FINAL vision of Alice completes the first. In the last scene of Marber's play, it is revealed that Alice was killed in Manhattan, hit by a car when she barreled with characteristic heedlessness into the street. The movie ends very differently. Alice is walking blithely amid a New York rush-hour crowd; men's heads swivel to check out this luscious young thing as she strides past. The hunt for love, or something like love, continues, and Alice, rare and splendid, is clearly primed for the next thrill; one already pities the next man she will collide with, and pities her as well.

Such strange ambivalence marks the entire film. This is a world where sex has no limits; in the sexual marketplace, there is an orifice or appendage available to satisfy every desire. Yet amid the rutting chaos, people still hope for love.

Marber and Nichols have rendered this desperate predicament with lacerating indignation and tender sorrow.

Had they taken the same care in creating living characters as in deploying artful language and camera work to elucidate great themes, this would have been a nearly perfect movie. Even as it is, *Closer* is remarkable. Although leading critics have complained that it “collapses into a welter of misplaced intensity,” or that “it’s all dressed up but it’s got nowhere of interest to go,” and although audiences may find it dismal or even toxic, *Closer* reveals what has become of our appetites and yearnings better than any other movie I can think of.

BUT THE film that everybody has really loved this past year is *Sideways*. Directed by Alexander Payne, written by Payne and Jim Taylor, it won an Academy Award for best adapted screenplay and was nominated for best picture. Taking as a given the psychic damage done by a culture in which promiscuity, adultery, and divorce are becoming the norm, it nevertheless holds out the hope that wounds can be healed and true love grasped. Who would not want to hear such news?

Miles (Paul Giamatti) and Jack (Thomas Haden Church), Californians who appear to have seen the dark side of forty, are off on a week-long road trip to the wine country on the eve of Jack’s wedding to an Armenian-American princess. Each of the partners in this two-man bachelor party is perennially feckless in his own way. Miles, an eighth-grade English teacher, still nurses a dim hope of seeing his long, heavy novel published; inveterately despondent since his divorce from Victoria, brought on by his adultery, he has not laid hands on a woman in two years; a fanatically expert judge of wine, he appears headed for alcoholism. Jack, an actor who once starred in a soap

opera, now mostly does voice-overs for commercials. He has no trouble attracting women, and serious trouble resisting them.

Miles sees their trip as a perfect opportunity to initiate Jack into the rich and subtle pleasures of wine; Jack sees their trip as the last chance to add to his sexual scorecard before marriage shuts down his act. With comradely solicitude, Jack promises to help his friend “get [his] bone smooched” as well, but Miles declares himself averse to casual smooching. Although he is plainly desperate for action, he still dreams of re-connecting with his ex-wife. And so, when Jack informs Miles that Victoria has remarried and will be coming to the wedding with her new husband, Miles goes forlornly berserk, tearing down a steep hill into a vineyard, chugging a bottle of wine. A subsequent close-up shows Miles’s hands cradling two bunches of grapes, his fingers running lovingly, miserably over them as though caressing a woman’s breasts.

Fortunately, consolations present themselves. Jack picks up Stephanie (Sandra Oh), an Asian-American wine pourer who has a motorcycle and a small Afro-Asian daughter and an extravagant craving for sex. Miles, thanks to Jack’s dogged exhortations and some politic lying about his novel’s imminent publication, hits it off with Stephanie’s good friend Maya, a waitress and graduate student in horticulture, recently divorced from a philosophy professor. She is wondrously lovely, appreciates wine even more rapturously than Miles does, and lives amid floral beauty like one of the Graces in Botticelli’s *Primavera*, a figure the actress Virginia Madsen could have posed for in her prime.

But now autumn is coming in her beauty—her cheeks and forehead beginning to look raw-boned, the lushness of youth being honed away—as it is in the faces of all four revelers. Their joys are shot through

with sadness, and the sadness will rip its way out with an unpleasant comic edge. After a night of lovemaking, Miles inadvertently lets slip to Maya that Jack is getting married on Saturday; Maya stalks off, feeling soiled. Stephanie, to whom Jack has pledged his love and who loved him back, caves in his nose with her motorcycle helmet.

It looks bad for the boys, and gets worse. Miles’s agent tells him his novel has been definitively rejected; he insanely dumps the contents of a spit bucket over himself at a wine tasting. Jack bunks down with a fat girl, and the boys barely escape havoc from her behemoth husband. At Jack’s wedding, Miles talks to the pregnant Victoria; he attempts to smile, but his lips peel distressingly away from his teeth and get stuck in a grimace, making him look like a small animal cornered and terrified. A remarkable scene follows, as Miles takes his most prized bottle of wine to a fast-food joint and drinks it with his burger, furtively. There is a certain cerebral pleasure in the act, along with the knowledge that a future of loneliness stretches before him.

Had this movie been worthy of the praise it has received, it might have shown its characters learning to live with the sadness of irredeemable mistakes. Payne has previously made such a movie: *About Schmidt* (2002) draws a bead on a retired Omaha insurance man (played by Jack Nicholson in his most subdued performance) whose apparently safe choices in love and work have turned on him; his struggle to come back to genuine life will find him overmatched, but he fails like a man, and his sadness is bracing. Audiences and critics alike found *About Schmidt* a downer. As if to compensate, Miles, in *Sideways*, is made to enjoy a typical movieland triumph: Maya leaves a message on his answering machine, saying she loved his novel, and telling him she hopes to see him when he’s in town. The final shot

is of him knocking on her door, an adolescent fantasy coming true.

Sideways is about the sort of adolescence that these days persists into, or resurfaces in, middle age. In performances that could hardly be bettered, Giamatti and Church (the latter, like Madsen, earned an Oscar nomination) are two teen archetypes gone long in the tooth. Miles is moping, snarky, guarded, demonstratively pained, sexually hapless, and utterly self-absorbed. Jack is ebullient, indiscriminately horny, comically insufferable in his openness, and utterly self-absorbed. Jack has behaved like a kid all his life; Miles has taken a shot at manhood and been scorched. Thus a goddess *ex machi-*

na is required to rescue him from the predicament he has wormed his way into. Through her intervention, every great thing is possible, just as though he were still fourteen.

One is tempted to say that *Sideways* is superb until the final minute, but in fact one could smell the Hollywood ending coming a mile away. A movie that could have been extraordinary finishes as a sop to grown-ups who find growing up rather more than they can handle. (This is true of the boys, at any rate; the girls are endowed with every desirable human quality in the book.) Perhaps playing upon a latent desperation in its audience, *Sideways* ends like a Molly Ringwald movie to soothe the incipient-geezer set.

FOR MOST Americans, sex and love will never be anything like what they were for previous generations. So these movies tell us in their various ways. Old-fashioned virtue survives in bunkers. Normality has become aberrant, and must resist a prevailing coarseness that even Kinsey could not have foreseen, though he would surely have embraced it. The serious artists working in Hollywood, who include Patrick Marber and Mike Nichols and, at his best, Alexander Payne, have begun to recognize the full effects of 21st-century mores, and their work is worth attending to for news about our most intimate lives. It would help if more moviemakers looked even harder, and declined to flinch.

MUSIC

Master of the Art Song

Terry Teachout

UNLIKE MOST well-known classical singers, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who turns eighty on May 28, retired unexpectedly and unobtrusively. Twelve years ago, without making the customary “farewell tour,” the German bari-

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tone simply issued a statement declaring that he would no longer sing in public—and kept his word. The performances he had previously contracted for, including what would have been his last American recitals, were canceled, and at the same time he stopped making recordings.¹ As a result, his reputation, especially in this country, is now in something of an eclipse. He is by no means forgotten, but he is no longer much talked about, either.

To listeners with long memories, such a thing will hardly seem possi-

ble. Not only was Fischer-Dieskau one of the most admired singers of the 20th century, he was also one of the most controversial. For every critic who praised the acute intelligence of his art-song interpretations, another found them fussy. Some thought his soft singing exquisitely sensitive, others limp and croony.

Whatever one may think of Fis-

¹ Fischer-Dieskau continues to perform on occasion as an orchestral conductor, but he has never appeared on the podium in the U.S., nor has he succeeded in establishing himself in that capacity anywhere else in the world.

cher-Dieskau, there is no shortage of evidence on which to base an opinion—virtually any opinion—of his artistry. He is thought to have made more recordings than any other classical musician, and he certainly recorded a wider-ranging repertoire than any singer who has ever lived. To take only a few examples chosen at random, he left behind performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Verdi's *Otello*, Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, Fauré's *La Bonne Chanson*, Barber's *Dover Beach*, Stravinsky's *Abraham and Isaac* (in Hebrew!), Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony, and all the songs of Schubert suitable for performance by a male voice.

It goes without saying that no one could possibly have sung so many different kinds of music equally well. For all his gifts as a linguist, it was only in Austro-German music that Fischer-Dieskau sounded at home, just as he was far more comfortable as a recitalist than on the opera stage. Fascinating though his ventures into other idioms may have been, there can be no doubt that he will be remembered chiefly as an interpreter of German *lieder*, and in particular of the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss, Mahler, and Wolf, which he sang throughout his long career.

But *how* will he be remembered? At one extreme of critical opinion is the English vocal connoisseur John B. Steane:

I have never heard Fischer-Dieskau sing without being able to learn something from it. With learning comes feeling. There is no dichotomy here. Intellect and emotion are fused; that is the distinctive mark of the civilized European culture which Fischer-Dieskau throughout his long career has represented so well.

At the other is the late Samuel Lipman, here commenting on Fischer-Dieskau's renderings of Hugo Wolf:

The effect of all [his] artfulness is an overwrought absorption in the material. Everything seems to verge on the hysterical. . . . [T]he hysteria and instability Fischer-Dieskau thus communicates is not all, or even the best part, of what Hugo Wolf's art is about.²

Are these views mutually exclusive—and if so, which one is correct? Or could it be that the truth about Fischer-Dieskau's complex art lies somewhere in between?

BORN IN Berlin in 1925, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau served in the Wehrmacht in World War II, was captured by the Americans in Italy in 1945, and returned to Germany two years later to make his professional debut. The great English accompanist Gerald Moore was told on a 1951 visit to Cologne that the young man, as yet unknown outside Germany, was "already the world's finest *lieder* singer." Six months later, he was recording Schubert songs with Moore for EMI, having just made his Salzburg Festival debut with Wilhelm Furtwängler on the podium. World-wide fame followed shortly thereafter.

No classical singer is a prodigy, but Fischer-Dieskau was for all intents and purposes fully formed when he launched his international career at the age of twenty-six. He was also exceptionally self-confident, as his memories of his first recording session indicate:

Walter Legge, as supervisor of the recording, wanted to follow his usual habit of involving himself in shaping my understanding (of some Hugo Wolf *lieder* and Schubert's *Schöne Müllerin*). Estimating the situation subjectively, I thought I should stick with my own ideas, and he soon fell silent. He never forgave me.

Legge, a notorious meddler, was then one of the most powerful men in the classical recording industry, as well as the husband of the soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, with

whom Fischer-Dieskau would appear frequently. That a still-obscure German baritone should have refused to kowtow to him is little short of astonishing. Yet Fischer-Dieskau continued to record for EMI, for the very good reason that he was every bit as gifted as he thought he was. "He had only to sing one phrase," Gerald Moore recalled, "before I knew I was in the presence of a master."

Not only was he determined to sing as he thought right, he was similarly determined to transform the institution of the art-song recital as it was then being practiced in Germany and elsewhere:

[A] kind of assorted menu [of songs] had taken over the programs. . . . I countered this trend, mainly for the pure pleasure of shaping a sequence, with *lieder* having a common denominator; this underlying theme demands concentration from a concert audience expecting sensationalism or distraction. The arrangement also corresponded to a performance style I intended to perfect over time. I wanted to do justice to all the essential characteristics of the form; I wanted to get close to the essence of the *lied*, to suppress nothing and make no concessions either to vocal limitations or popular taste.

His ideas met with initial resistance from concert promoters, but comparatively few recitalists were then active in Europe (most of the best ones having long ago fled Hitler's wrath), and the fact that Fischer-Dieskau was able to sell out concert halls with unabashedly serious single-composer programs made it possible for him to do as he liked. Though his opera career was mainly confined to Germany, for the next half-century he appeared in recital throughout Europe, as well as in New York and a few other American cities.

² "Singing Wolf," COMMENTARY, July 1981, reprinted in Lipman's *The House of Music: Art in an Era of Institutions* (1984).

For the most part, though, Fischer-Dieskau's reputation was based on his records. Like Schwarzkopf, the soprano Maria Callas, the conductor Herbert von Karajan, and the pianist Dinu Lipatti, all of whom became famous after World War II (and all of whom, not coincidentally, were produced by Legge), he saw the record album as an expressive end in itself, and so poured vast amounts of energy into recording large chunks of his huge repertoire.

Even in the earliest of these performances, Fischer-Dieskau's salient characteristics as singer and interpreter are immediately apparent. The first thing one notices is the natural beauty of the voice itself, a quintessentially German lyric baritone, fine-grained and smooth-surfaced. It was, though, neither warm-toned nor especially large in size, and the upper register, lacking the heft and bite that singers call "metal," hardened under pressure. As if to compensate, he cultivated a widely varied dynamic range, and his soft, delicate *mezza-voce* singing, into which he mixed a larger-than-usual amount of falsetto, would become something of a trademark.³

In much the same way, Fischer-Dieskau managed to convert his lack of vocal warmth into an asset. The essential quality of his voice was dignified, even noble—one might almost call it philosophical—making him the ideal exponent of such works as Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge* ("Four Serious Songs"). But he could also sing with an intensity bordering on the expressionistic, thereby giving him access to the emotional extremes of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and the songs of Hugo Wolf. At the same time, he was unforgettable in such purely lyrical songs as Schumann's "*Mondnacht*" and Strauss's "*Morgen!*" He was far less effective in comic songs and operatic roles, in which, like many Germans, he tended to be unsubtle to the point of grossness, just as his singing of the music of Verdi

and other Italian composers was stiff and overemphatic.

No less characteristic was his detailed approach to interpretation, an approach that the critic Alan Blyth has called "interventionist" and that had little to do with the way older singers had performed *lieder* and other art songs. It can be heard in any of Fischer-Dieskau's recordings of "*Gute Nacht*," the first song of *Winterreise*, the 1827 song cycle in which Schubert set a sequence of two dozen poems by Wilhelm Müller that tell the story of the aftermath of a failed love affair.⁴

To hear how drastically the singer departs from received tradition, one need only compare his version of this deceptively simple-sounding song with the one recorded in 1927 by the much-admired German tenor Richard Tauber.⁵ Like Fischer-Dieskau, Tauber sings "*Gute Nacht*" vividly and with much *rubato*, loosening Schubert's strictly notated rhythms to give the simple melodic line a speech-like quality. But he never alters his basic timbre in response to Müller's text, and his delivery is straightforward, much as if he were singing a ballad—one with whose emotional content he is fully engaged but from which he nonetheless remains detached, as if he were telling a story.

Fischer-Dieskau, by contrast, approaches "*Gute Nacht*" less as a storyteller than as an actor performing a monologue written in the first person (as the text of *Winterreise* is indeed written). Individual phrases—even individual words—are subtly stressed and colored so as to underline their meaning. The effect is almost kaleidoscopic in the variety of its nuance, and a listener accustomed to Tauber's simpler style could be forgiven for finding it oversophisticated, even mannered.

To be sure, Fischer-Dieskau is singing "*Gute Nacht*," not reciting it. His interpretation is as deeply rooted in Schubert's music as it is in Müller's words. Even so, it could

hardly be more different from that of Tauber. I am tempted to compare their two styles to those of Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby:

Sinatra's emotional candor stands in stark contrast to the impenetrable reserve of Crosby, who once famously told the lyricist Johnny Burke not to write songs for him that contained the phrase "I love you." Unlike Sinatra, he was never a confessional artist, and the intensity he brought to his early recordings of ballads like "Stardust" was musical rather than dramatic. (To put it another way, he sang songs, not monologues.)⁶

Fischer-Dieskau's style was never more widely admired, both by critics and by the public at large, than in the 60's, when his voice was in its prime. But starting in the early 70's, his upper register began to harden still further, and he refused to restrict his repertoire to songs that fell within the shrinking compass of his vocal capacities. Instead, he re-recorded his repertoire with new accompanists, apparently in the belief that fresh interpretative insights would compensate for an increasingly frayed-sounding instrument.

In fact, the opposite was true: Fischer-Dieskau's later recordings are without exception inferior in quality to the ones he made in the 50's and 60's. In concert, his undi-

³ This is what those who dislike Fischer-Dieskau's singing have in mind when they dismiss it as "crooning." Unlike pop "crooners," though, he sang even the quietest of music with full vocal support, and as anyone who heard him in concert can testify, his soft singing was audible throughout such large auditoriums as New York City's Carnegie Hall.

⁴ Representative recordings by Fischer-Dieskau are listed in the discography at the end of this piece.

⁵ Tauber's version is on *Tauber Sings Lieder* (Pearl GEMM CD 9370). He omits the song's second and third stanzas.

⁶ "Whatever Happened to Bing Crosby," COMMENTARY, April 2001, reprinted as "Crosby Major, Crosby Minor" in *A Terry Teachout Reader* (Yale).

minished intensity and compelling physical presence continued to make an indelible impression, but in front of the microphone he became a blustery, hectoring caricature of himself when young.⁷

LIKE ALL artists of distinction, Fischer-Dieskau deserves to be judged in the end by his best work, not his worst. Yet even at his best he was an unusual artist, and thus by definition not to everyone's liking. It is easy to see, for instance, what the critic Greg Sandow had in mind when he complained that "I wish he'd just let the music speak for itself." Instead, Fischer-Dieskau spoke for it, always perceptively, often beautifully—but at times distractingly. In addition, he was, like Sinatra, a supremely confessional artist, and those who find this quality unsympathetic have typically responded to his emotionalism with a combination of distaste and something not unlike embarrassment.

What, then, are we to make of Fischer-Dieskau today? My own experience is, I think, worth recounting in this connection. Like so many music lovers of my generation (I was born in 1956), it was through his

recordings that I discovered the beauties of German *lieder*, and for a long time I thought there was no other way to sing them. Not until later did I become acquainted with the work of such singers of the 78 era as Tauber, Karl Erb, Hans Hotter, Gerhard Hüsch, Herbert Janssen, Alexander Kipnis, Lotte Lehmann, John McCormack, Charles Panzéra, Heinrich Schlusnus, Aksel Schjötz, and Elisabeth Schumann, all of whom exemplified in their differing ways the older tradition eloquently epitomized by Samuel Lipman:

The best of the older performances give an impression of simplicity combined with grandeur, of sensitivity to each poem's mood combined with a clear, unforced, and restrained projection of the individual words.

Even in Fischer-Dieskau's day there were singers, most notably the mezzo-soprano Janet Baker and the tenor Peter Schreier, who offered alternatives to his "interventionist" style. In our own time, the mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter and the bass-baritone Bryn Terfel (neither of whom, as it happens, is German) have opted for a more plain-

spoken interpretative path that I now find highly congenial.

Yet I also find myself returning again and again to Fischer-Dieskau, perhaps not with the innocent pleasure of youth but with what I hope is an enhanced appreciation of his special virtues. What I did not realize in the 70's—and what many critics, then and now, have failed to see—was that his style is not a "solution" to the "problem" of *lieder* interpretation. It is, rather, the deeply personal, deeply considered approach of a remarkable artist, not to be imitated or held up as a universal standard but simply to be savored for its own sake.

Sometimes it works, sometimes not, and at all times there continue to be other approaches that are no less valid. Musical interpretation, after all, is not an exact science. Yet surely there has never been a more interesting singer than Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau—nor, on his best days, a greater one.

⁷ Especially poignant are the 1985 recordings of *Winterreise* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe* with the pianist Alfred Brendel, in which the interpretative spirit is more than willing but the flesh has weakened to the point of incapability.

Fischer-Dieskau on CD: An Introduction

MOST OF Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's recordings are out of print, but a substantial number of the best ones are currently available on CD, including these ten:

1951-58: The freshness and bloom of Fischer-Dieskau's youthful voice can be heard in his first recording of Schubert's *Schwanengesang*, D. 957, made in London with Gerald Moore. It is coupled on CD with his earliest recordings (also with Moore) of four popular Schubert songs, "Erlkönig," "Nacht und Träume," "Ständchen," and "Du bist die Ruh'" (EMI CMS 7 63559).

1953: Though Fischer-Dieskau was rarely at his best in comic opera, he enjoyed singing the role of Papageno in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (although he never appeared on stage in the role because he was too tall). His charming interpretation is well caught in the recording he made with Rita Streich, Ernst Haefliger, and the RIAS Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, conducted by Ferenc Fricsay (DGG 435 741-2, two CD's).

1958: Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*, Op. 121, provided the occasion for one of the most admired of Fischer-Dieskau's early recordings, a breath-

taking performance accompanied by Jörg Demus, perhaps the most sympathetic of the many pianists with whom he worked (DG 463 509-2).

1961: Fischer-Dieskau's first recording of *Die schöne Müllerin* was made with Gerald Moore in 1951. The two men re-recorded Schubert's most popular song cycle in stereo a decade later, and the results are widely thought by admirers and detractors alike to represent the summit of the baritone's art (EMI CMS 7 66959).

1961: Fischer-Dieskau appeared in oratorio throughout his career, nev-

er to better effect than in the compellingly grave performance of Brahms's *German Requiem*, Op. 45, that he recorded with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Otto Klemperer, and the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus (EMI CMS 7 66955).

1963: Of the many modern works premiered by Fischer-Dieskau, the only one to become popular is Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, Op. 66, definitively recorded by the baritone with Peter Pears, Galina Vishnevskaya, and the composer conducting the London Symphony and the Melos Ensemble. Of particular note is the harrowing confrontation between Pears and Fischer-Dieskau as the English and German soldiers of Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting" (Decca 414 383-2, two CD's).

1965: Fischer-Dieskau's interpre-

tation of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, has been criticized for its exaggerated emotionalism, but few versions are as finely sung as the one he did with Jörg Demus (DGG 463 505-2).

1966: Over the years, Fischer-Dieskau would become closely identified with Schubert's *Winterreise*, which he re-recorded more often than any other song cycle. His favorite version was this one, accompanied by Demus, in which the disparate elements of his style are held in perfect balance (DGG 447 421-2).

1966: Fischer-Dieskau performed on several occasions with Leonard Bernstein, for whom he expressed admiration tinged with ambivalence. The most involving of their recorded collaborations is the high-strung version of Mahler's *Das Lied von der*

Erde with the tenor James King and the Vienna Philharmonic. It is a performance of the widest possible extremes, never comfortable and never dull (Decca 466 381-2).

1966-67: Fischer-Dieskau's "interventionist" approach to the songs of Hugo Wolf is at its most compelling in the recording of the *Spanish Songbook* that he made with Schwarzkopf and Moore. Even those who find his singing too finicky will be disarmed by the simplicity of "*Herr, was trägt der Boden hier*" and "*Nun wandre, Maria*" (DGG 457 726-2, two CD's).

Most of these recordings can be downloaded in whole or in part from Apple's iTunes Music Store. All of them can be purchased online as CD's by viewing this article during the month of May on COMMENTARY's website:

www.commentarymagazine.com

"As a young Jewish GI, he looked Goering in the eye and lived to tell about it. . . . Obermayer's story is a shining example of what Tom Brokaw called 'The Greatest Generation.'"—**BRIAN WILLIAMS**, anchor and managing editor, NBC Nightly News

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Books in Review

House Master

Winning the Future:
A 21st Century
Contract with America

by Newt Gingrich
Regnery. 243 pp. \$27.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

NEWTON GINGRICH, an inescapable political presence in the mid-90's and a largely forgotten figure in the years since, is back in business and very much on stage again. A fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a lobbyist/consultant as head of the new Gingrich Group, he is turning up on the television talk shows. The word is out that he might make a run for President in 2008. And now he has this book, my copy of which has a dust jacket bearing the message "*New York Times* Bestseller," which it actually was for seven weeks.

The subtitle is an echo of Gingrich's original "Contract with

America." This 1994 document was the platform on which most Republicans ran for Congress in that year; it gave them a landslide win and control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years. Between the midterm election years of 1990 and 1994, the Republican vote rose by 9 million and the Democratic vote declined by 1 million—a swing of 10 million, an all-time record for two consecutive non-presidential campaigns.

With Gingrich installed as Speaker, and President Clinton adjusting his notions about what worked in politics, substantial chunks of the Contract were ultimately translated into law: welfare reform, lower taxes, increased defense spending, a balanced budget. It is true that some other provisions, including congressional term limits, never gained much traction. Still, Gingrich was on top of the world in 1995, and was named *Time's* Man of the Year.

His subsequent downfall astonished the political establishment, and even in retrospect remains something of a conundrum. It does seem clear that he created enemies with the imperious management

style he brought to the speakership, resulting in an almost-successful coup attempt against him by senior House Republicans in 1997. In the 1998 election, he predicted a Republican gain of 20 to 30 seats, but instead the party lost five seats, and the sniping against him escalated. He was still Speaker of the House, and his party still had a fair majority (eleven votes)—but instead of riding out the storm, he abruptly resigned as Speaker and retired as the representative of Georgia's affluent sixth district, where his electability was never in doubt.

Possibly he was bored, or just fed up with political infighting. Possibly he wanted to spend some time making money. In any event, he opted for a new career.

GINGRICH's 1994 Contract had a built-in unifying theme: it was a declaration of war against entrenched Democratic liberalism, an all too visible enemy that millions of Americans had learned to loathe. But no such theme is sustainable today. Republicans control the White House, both houses of Congress, more state legislatures than do the

Democrats, a majority of state governorships.

Inevitably, Gingrich's new Contract, as it is set out here, appears less focused than the 1994 version and broadly consistent with what the White House is already hoping to accomplish. It comes at you with an avalanche of proposals, some persuasive, some troublesome, many developed at length, others per-

functory (e.g., the three-page chapter on helping the disabled to lead active lives). Among the major entries are the following.

- An opening chapter on the war against terrorism calls for tripling the size of our intelligence operation (with a stress on much more "human intelligence"), reaching into the Middle East with a major television presence, and substantially bolster-

ing our investment in new military technology. Gingrich does not deal with the staggering costs of such a program, but the idea as presented is nevertheless compelling—and in any case, the money would be instantly available if jihad brought another disaster to the United States.

- The country's wobbly Social Security system is the subject of the second chapter, which makes a good—if strangely incomplete—case for the private accounts being pursued by the President. Gingrich's own preferred version is a proposal put forward last summer by Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin and Senator John Sununu of New Hampshire. It would enable an average worker to put 6.4 percent of taxable income (up to the Social Security ceiling, currently \$87,900) into the new accounts.

The higher returns to workers exercising this option would gradually eliminate the system's unfunded liability while also promising expanded benefits and, in the long run, a reduction in payroll taxes. An associated "safety net" would assure that no worker received less than what is guaranteed under present arrangements. Gingrich notes that that these claims for Ryan-Sununu have been supported by the Social Security system's chief actuary.

- The third chapter, titled "The Centrality of Our Creator in Defining America," is a passionate call for a war on the judges and educators who have barred public expressions of oaths and prayers mentioning God, and in general have limited the role of religion in public life. Gingrich wants this role expanded, and along the way argues for public acceptance of America as an essentially Christian society. (Survey data put those identifying themselves as Christian at 80 percent or more.) He makes the now familiar case that the courts have persistently distorted the First Amendment's establishment clause, demanding complete extirpation of religion from the public square

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when the clause only prohibits an officially established religion.

- The fourth chapter proposes to shrink the power of an out-of-control judiciary (and not only with respect to religion). Gingrich wants Congress to pass legislation explicitly rejecting the concept of judicial supremacy, i.e., the idea that the Supreme Court is the final arbiter of what is constitutional. If the Court were to rule that a federal law was unconstitutional, he would have the legislative and executive branches pass the law a second time.

In any such struggle, Gingrich contends, the judges would inevitably lose. One weapon he would employ against them is the Constitution's Article III, which provides that federal judges "shall hold their offices during good behavior." Over the years, this clause has occasionally been invoked to get rid of judges guilty of financial corruption. Gingrich suggests that we now use it to terminate activist judges who translate their own political preferences into constitutional principles.

- The next chapter serves up proposals for reform of the immigration process. Clumsily titled "Patriotic Immigration," it argues that we must make it much harder for Mexicans and others to "sneak in," but joins the President in recommending that guest workers be allowed to enter the country easily and legally.

Gingrich also wants the states to go back to the serious "Americanization" programs that helped immigrants assimilate in past generations. Citing arguments by the political scientist Samuel Huntington, he opposes dual citizenship and massive bilingual-education programs. But, ignoring Huntington—whose data demonstrate that, even after three or four generations, Mexicans have resisted assimilation—he takes it for granted that large-scale Mexican immigration is necessary and desirable.

- Another major chapter offers proposals designed to prevent our

country from being eaten alive by the voracious health-care sector, now accounting for 14 percent of gross domestic product and rising. Gingrich puts forward a cluster of ideas: tax-exempt health savings accounts, technologies to increase patients' knowledge of their problems and treatment, an online drug-purchasing system, major speedups in the time required to get new drugs and treatments from research labs to the marketplace, worldwide sharing of medical advances, and—of all things—a "medical tourism" program designed to bring foreigners to our land when they need the best available treatment.

An overall claim made for these particular reforms is that, in creating informed health-care consumers and giving them greater responsibility for their own treatment, we would finally get some competition in this sector, and in the process gain huge cost reductions. Although Gingrich is surely overrating the extent to which Americans can take charge of their own health care, it certainly seems plausible that the system would benefit from increased competition.

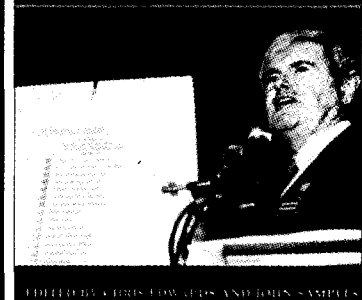
CONSERVATIVE READERS of *Winning the Future* will come away with strong talking points on issues dear to them. But many conservatives who essentially agree with Gingrich on the issues are nevertheless likely to rate the book a dreadful disappointment. Its critique of existing arrangements is often informed and sensible, but its recommendations are often problematic, and their difficulties tend to go unacknowledged.

In his discussion of Social Security, for instance, a maddening omission is any elaboration of the sizable transition costs associated with Ryan-Sununu. Readers are told at the end of every chapter that "more information" is available at Gingrich's website (www.newt.org/winningthefuture). There you could find a link to an article by Peter

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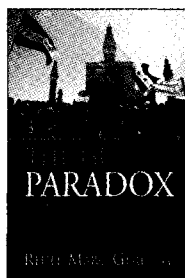
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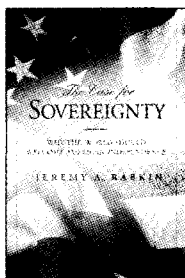
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Ferrara of the Institute for Policy Innovation that would give you a sense of how the Ryan-Sununu plan might actually work. Ferrara puts the transition costs at \$3.8 trillion, and helps the reader see it as the price of eliminating the system's \$11 trillion of unfunded liabilities. But it does seem odd that Gingrich, or, rather, his ghostwriters—identified in the acknowledgments as "The Book Team"—barely touch on the transition costs and neglect to make the case for paying them in their own words.

Similarly, when he turns to the judiciary, Gingrich is devastating in his critique of judicial activism, and fascinating in his argument that the Warren court and its successors have been misreading *Marbury v. Madison*, the 1803 decision invariably cited as the solid rock supporting judicial review. But Gingrich's favored solution would appear to present some large problems. If Republican regimes could readily fire activist judges, equating their imperfect understanding of the Constitution with "bad behavior," what would prevent a Congress controlled by liberal Democrats from firing strict-constructionist judges rated insufficiently attuned to the "living Constitution"? Would the country really be better off with these new rules?

Seriously magnifying these problems in the book's content is its wretched style. Any argument can be trivialized and undermined by bad writing, and this recurrently happens to Gingrich here. Sentences repeatedly fail to parse. Mysterious pronouncements abound. ("A reasonable estimate would be that this war will last until 2070.") Sizable stretches of the text read like Power Point presentations.

Even the book's basic organization is botched. The introduction lists five proposals and instructs the reader: "This is what needs to be done." The first chapter then starts off by listing ten "key provisions" of the new Contract, each presumably

needing to be implemented. But the ten provisions fail to include some of the book's most important proposals (including the effort to discipline the judiciary). Furthermore, they do not match up with the sixteen chapters, each of which bears its own proposal.

So Newt Gingrich is presenting us with yet another conundrum. He is plainly a serious, highly intelligent man. He has a Ph.D. in modern European history and a strategic vision worth rendering seriously. This book is not serious. How could he have put his signature on it? More to the point, why didn't he sit down and write it himself? The pity is all the greater because, in this ambitious package of ideas and proposals, a few deserve to be heard in a more convincing form.

In the Aftermath

Saturday

by Ian McEwan

Nan Talese. 289 pp. \$26.00

Extremely Loud
& Incredibly Close

by Jonathan Safran Foer

Houghton Mifflin. 326 pp. \$24.95

Reviewed by
Sam Munson

WRITING A novel about catastrophic events that are still inescapably present in our collective imagination makes strenuous demands—demands that have hindered or defeated even writers of great intelligence and ability. But in the case of 9/11, and in spite of the dangers, American and European novelists have found the challenge

SAM MUNSON's review of two collections of short fiction appeared in the December 2004 COMMENTARY.

irresistible. Heidi Julavits opened the floodgates last year with *The Effect of Living Backwards*. Joyce Carol Oates contributed a short story, "The Mutants," included in her latest collection, *I Am No One You Know*. Frederic Beigbeder's French bestseller *Windows on the World* appeared in March in English; Nick McDonell's *The Third Brother* will be out in September. And that is only a small sampling.

Even in this decidedly mixed company, Ian McEwan and Jonathan Safran Foer make the strangest of bedfellows. McEwan is British; Foer, American. McEwan is the author of a series of intelligent, highly regarded novels, most recently *Amsterdam* (1998) and *Atonement* (2001); Foer made his debut in 2002 with the bestseller *Everything Is Illuminated*. Formally McEwan is a traditionalist, and an unapologetic realist, as deeply interested in the voluminous physical data of life as he is in its large, stony questions. Foer is an experimenter and a comic surrealist, playful and endlessly loquacious.

Despite the differences between them, 9/11 is a natural subject for each. Death, murder, crime, abandonment, and social breakdown are persistent themes in McEwan's work; Foer's career-opening novel is about the Holocaust. That they have both turned their attention to September 11, 2001, and that their books have appeared more or less simultaneously, gives readers an opportunity to observe two sharply distinguished, even opposed, writerly temperaments placed at the service of a common end.

McEwan's *Saturday* narrates a day in the life of Henry Perowne, a successful neurosurgeon. The Saturday in question—February 15, 2003—falls a little more than a month before the beginning of the American-led campaign in Iraq. The day opens with Perowne standing naked, in the early morning, before his bedroom window, watching a

cargo plane with one engine on fire descending to its uncertain fate over London. As his weekly day of rest progresses, the peculiar story of this plane and its pilots plays itself out in the background, depressing him, elating him, and disillusioning him by turns.

Perowne putters about his house waiting for the early television news to come on; watches an exuberant crowd of protesters gathering in the square on which he lives; retrieves his Mercedes from the garage; plays a round of squash with his anaesthetist; visits his senile mother; and prepares dinner for his family—prosecutes, in short, the unremarkable, absorbing weekend routine of an affluent Westerner. But the sense of unease the plane has brought into his sunny life turns out to be justified.

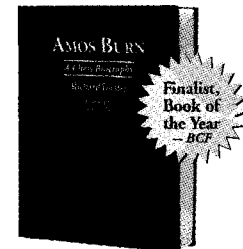
As Perowne wends his way through the protest march to his squash game, a deranged, twitchy thug named Baxter sideswipes his car. Held down by one of Baxter's flunkies, Perowne avoids a beating by diagnosing the gang leader's twitch as a symptom of a neurological disorder, Huntington's chorea. Hours later, however, Baxter reappears at Perowne's house as he is serving the dinner he has prepared, holding his wife at knifepoint and threatening his newly pregnant daughter with rape. With the help of his daughter and his son, Perowne subdues Baxter, who then ends up in the emergency room under his care. Perowne spares his life, and the novel ends with the neurosurgeon gratefully surrendering to sleep in his wife's arms.

The disruption of the established movements of life, often by means of violence, is a preoccupying theme of earlier novels by McEwan—in particular, *The Cement Garden* (1978), *Enduring Love* (1997), and *Atonement*. Rather than enervating him or making him facile, the subject appears to put him at his ease. In *Saturday* the prose is as supple and as replete as Henry Perowne's



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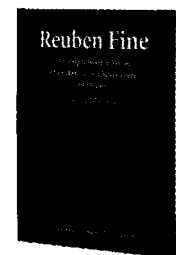
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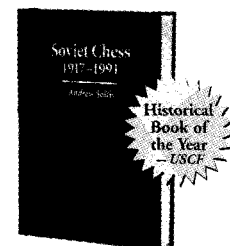
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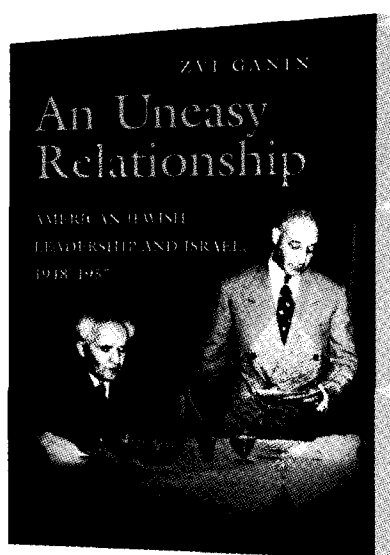
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own minutely observed responses to his life's rich, menacing, and incomprehensible tapestry. His first confrontation with Baxter, a moment of isolation and terror, forms a piece of that fabric:

The men have stopped to look at something in the road. The short fellow in the black suit touches with the tip of his shoe the BMW's shorn-off wing mirror. . . . They stare down at it together and then, at a remark from the short man, they turn their faces toward Perowne simultaneously, with abrupt curiosity, like deer disturbed in a forest. For the first time it occurs to him that he might be in some kind of danger. . . . There, behind him on Gower Street, the march proper has begun. Thousands packed in a single dense column are making for Piccadilly. . . . From their faces, hands, and clothes they emanate the rich color, almost like warmth, peculiar to compacted humanity. For dramatic effect, they're walking in silence to the funereal beat of marching drums.

The highly textured but low-pitched prose, with its accretion of detail and its insistent use of the present tense, allows the submerged uncertainty of life after 9/11 to emerge not as an occasion for rhetorical or stylistic fireworks but as one of the many tonal strains, albeit an intense one, pervading a man's daily experience. Perowne's ambivalence about the state of the world—he shifts between cautious support for the Iraq war and anxiety about it, tempered in each case by a groundnote of despairing detachment—does not impair his everyday moral compass. One of the last scenes of the book has him sitting by Baxter's bedside, contemplating "precisely what should be done." McEwan leaves open here the possibility of a quiet, undetectable murder; only as the book ends are we given to understand in a deliberate anticlimax that the question Perowne has been trying

to answer for himself is whether he should press charges.

In no way does Perowne serve as a stand-in for the author, although there are a few autobiographical flourishes: like his protagonist, McEwan lives in a large private house on a busy square, and Rosie Perowne bears a suspicious resemblance to McEwan's wife, Annalena McAfee. But Perowne himself is devoid of all writerly sentiment: he does not think in vivid or elaborated figures of speech, and his closest involvement with literature comes only by way of his daughter Daisy, a poet; in the confrontation with Baxter, it emerges that he does not even know who Matthew Arnold is. A master of his own difficult art, Perowne is an exceptionally alert, receptive, and meditative man; but he is not a mouthpiece for his creator. By thus absenting himself, as it were, from his protagonist, McEwan has paradoxically permitted this novel's conflicted vision of life in the aftermath of 9/11 to step forth in its own colors. In that respect among others, *Saturday* stands in stark contrast to Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*.

FOER HAS a natural gift for choosing subjects of great import and then pitching his distinctive voice sharply enough to be heard above their historical din. This may be in part what accounts for his coronation as *the* voice of his generation (a laurel that admittedly gets bestowed afresh every three to five years). His first novel, *Everything Is Illuminated*, concerned a young man named Jonathan Safran Foer in search of the unknown woman who saved his grandfather's life during the Holocaust. *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* concerns an even younger protagonist, the nine-year-old Oskar Schell, a New Yorker of German-American ancestry (the allusion to Guenter Grass's Oskar in *The Tin Drum* is anything but accidental), who is in search of the meaning of his father's death in the terrorist

attack on the World Trade Center.

Both the search and its possible meaning are neatly symbolized by a mysterious key, in an envelope labeled "Black," that Oskar finds among his father's possessions. Key in hand, he wanders determinedly through the five boroughs of the city, searching out everyone named Black in the hope of revelation. In the process he meets a whole cast of characters: Abby Black, the beautiful scientist; Ada Black, the socialite; A.R. Black, the quirky old man who ends each of his sentences with an exclamation point (and these are just the A's).

In the course of his wanderings, Oskar also comes face to face with the fact of his own isolation from his peers, of his mother's budding friendship with the widowed Ron, and of his crushing guilt at having failed to pick up his father's final phone calls, recorded on the morning of 9/11 on an answering machine that Oskar has kept hidden in a closet. By the novel's end, Oskar discovers that the key has an entirely different meaning from the one he had so fervently hoped to find; presumably, he must now look elsewhere for a way of coming to terms with his life.

The plot, however, is only half the story. As he did in *Everything Is Illuminated*, Foer makes use of a variety of formal devices in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, two of them prominent by their familiarity. Like Alex Perchov in the earlier novel, Oskar speaks in a chirpy, whimsical dialect—"heavy boots" is his clever, private idiom for depression, "dipshittake" his clever, public bowdlerization of "dipshit." And Foer again tells a story about the brutality of World War II. In *Everything Is Illuminated*, this story centered on the destruction of a *shtetl* in the Ukraine; in *Extremely Loud*, it centers on the firebombing of Dresden as experienced by Oskar's traumatized grandfather, Thomas Schell.

Oskar is, in principle at least, an ideal subject—a precocious, win-

some, obsessively curious boy, a constant dreamer-up of improbable inventions, from a detachable pocket to a shirt made of birdseed to various other instruments of concealment and escape. One of his most elaborate technological fantasies is of a

device that knew everyone you knew. . . . So when an ambulance went down the street, a big sign on the roof could flash

DON'T WORRY! DON'T WORRY!
if the sick person's device didn't detect the device of someone he knew nearby. And if the device *did* detect the device of someone he knew, the ambulance could flash the name of the person in the ambulance, and either

IT'S NOTHING MAJOR! IT'S
NOTHING MAJOR!

or, if it was something major,

IT'S MAJOR! IT'S MAJOR!

And maybe you could rate the people you knew by how much you loved them. . . .

And so on and, garrulously, on. All this is Foer's way of showing us, or belaboring us with, Oskar's great pain, fear, and susceptibility. The trouble is that, despite the long stretches of time a reader spends listening to Oskar's hyperactive narration, his habitual and unstoppable overstatement prevents one from ever coming to know the inner character of his pain and fear and susceptibility. The same is true of his grandfather, whose recital of his climactic, painful reunion with Oskar becomes, literally, less and less legible as it goes on, the spaces between the letters decreasing to the point of near-total blackness. We are meant to understand, obviously, that an impenetrable darkness descended on Thomas's life after the firebombing of Dresden, that this darkness persists just as strongly in the present, and that it has been revived at the sight of Oskar's own suffering—an understanding that presumably excuses Jonathan Safran Foer from conveying the actual experience of this darkness by

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means of language or, in a sense, from writing about it at all.

Oskar himself has been invested by Foer with little other than an intense desire for our attention. Perhaps for that reason, in those moments when he finally has our ear, he appears an utterly empty vessel. This would be a serious flaw in any novel so dependent on the voice of a single character. In a novel about a recent, world-altering tragedy, the failure is particularly egregious. There is little in Foer's book that we are not meant to grasp as a signpost, but what these ubiquitous and stagey signals direct us to remains unclear. In striving to come to terms with evil, *Extremely Loud* falls back on that most convenient of crutches, a child's suffering; in the process, it reduces the attack on the Twin Towers—an event filled with black intent—to a mere symbol, a conceptual shorthand.

ADMITTEDLY, FEW works of literature have succeeded in drawing lasting meaning, whole or fragmentary, from modernity's string of catastrophes: Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, the poems of Paul Celan, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, a handful of others. A recent book that can be added to this list, and one relevant to Foer's enterprise, is W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* (English translation, 2001). A dense, hypnotic novel, it is dominated by Jacques Austerlitz's focused but circuitous account of his childhood, youth, and manhood, his obsessive researches into his own history and that of his century, and his slow-won but inexorable conclusion that every supreme human effort casts a long and prominently visible shadow—the shadow, in Sebald's phrase, of its own destruction.

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close owes a large, unacknowledged debt to *Austerlitz*—from the coincidence of subject, to Thomas Schell's recursive, comma-peppered narrative style, to the polymath protagonist, to the black-and-white photographs that appear in its pages. But the two books are on such vastly different levels that comparison becomes ridiculous. Where *Austerlitz* proceeds from a profound knowledge of history and its depredations, *Extremely Loud* is little more than a collection of information gathered from history's grab-bag. And where *Austerlitz* leaves the reader with a shattering climactic scene—a family of ghostly dark-haired musicians at a third-rate circus near the Austerlitz train station in Paris, their wild, Eastern notes an emblem both of life's possibilities and its awful potential for extinction—*Extremely Loud* ends with a flipbook. In it, a series of doctored photos shows a man, in the midst of falling from one of the towers, reversing his course and ascending to an unseen heaven. Foer evidently considers this piece of bathos a worthy final meditation on history and time.

Sebald's title, *Austerlitz*, refers to Napoleon's brilliant victory in a major battle that took place in the fall of 1805. Bound up with this is another reference, namely, to the moment in *War and Peace* when Tolstoy first hints at his book's true theme, which is the powerlessness of the individual before the massed forces of history:

Just as, in a clock, the result of the complicated motion of innumerable wheels and pulleys is merely a slow and regular movement of the hands which show the time, so the result of all the complicated human activities of 160,000 Russians and French—all their passions, desires, remorse, humiliations, sufferings, outbursts of pride, fear, and enthusiasm—was only the loss of the battle of Austerlitz, the so-called battle of the three emper-

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ors—that is to say, a slow movement of the hand on the dial of human history.

Tolstoy's terrible "only" looms large throughout the novels of W.G. Sebald. It tints Ian McEwan's latest novel as well. *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* remains completely untouched by it. It may be the case that tragedy defeats us, particularly tragedy on a historical scale. But the best writers can, somehow, adapt themselves to the condition of radical uncertainty. Others, like Foer, baselessly confident, fond of the obvious, imposing on their readers' good will, simply pretend it away, and impoverish not only their novels but us.

Folk Lore

Chronicles, Volume I

by Bob Dylan

Simon & Schuster. 304 pp. \$24.00

Reviewed by
Roger Kaplan

"THIS AIN'T no protest song," a very young aspiring poet said to an audience at a New York City nightclub specializing in folk music circa 1961, "cause I don't write no protest songs."

Protest songs were all the rage then, and Robert Zimmerman, already billing himself as Bob Dylan, did not like to be thought fashionable. Born in 1941 in Duluth, Minnesota, he had come to New York with a strong sense that the popular-music scene was "wide open." He was right about that, and his own songs, which in fact often decried social injustice, caught the attention of

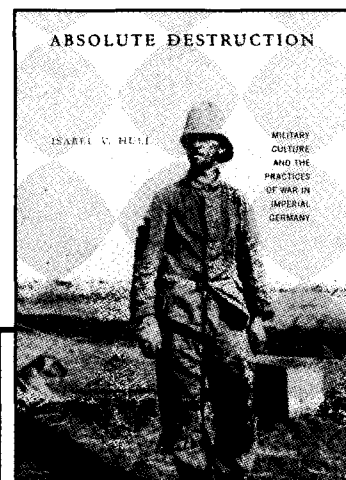
ROGER KAPLAN reviewed Alexander McCall Smith's *The Full Cupboard of Life* in the October 2004 COMMENTARY.

John Hammond, Columbia Records' legendary talent scout. Significantly enough, it is this event that frames Dylan's recent memoir, *Chronicles*, an account of his career until the end of the 1980's. (The book's subtitle, "Volume One," suggests that there may be further installments.)

Sketchy and elliptical, *Chronicles* is more interesting for its insights into Dylan's several mentors and friends than into Dylan and his music. As he has done in the past, he insists here on the influence of the mysterious and legendary Mississippi blues singer Robert Johnson, as well as on the help he received from the jazz guitarist Lonnie Johnson (no relation to Robert). But his main point concerns not so much the music or the songs but the fact that, while changing and adapting over the years, he has stayed true to himself. That is why the judgment of John Hammond, who found Bessie Smith and Charlie Parker and many others, matters far more to him than stories about his personal life, about which this book, despite some amusing and telling anecdotes, offers few details.

John Hammond liked Dylan's sound; he said it was sincere. It is unlikely that anyone today would question this judgment, but at the time, certain audiences and critics called Dylan opportunistic—that is to say, insincere. Specifically, he was accused of subverting folk music (of which "protest songs" are or were a sub-genre) by introducing elements more akin to rock 'n' roll.

This was nonsense, in terms both of his biography and of his music. Dylan grew up in the northern Middle West; the main road out of his part of the country was Highway 61, which ran south to New Orleans. His father and uncles were lower- and middle-class Jews whom he admired for their work ethic and their stoic patriotism (which included military service in World War II and Korea). But he entered his teens in the expansive mid-1950's, and the



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music he liked was the wildly exuberant sound that, with a few adjustments in lyrics, had come almost straight out of the Pentecostal churches. In high school, when he was not thinking of a military career, he wanted to be a rocker.

Dylan went into folk music ("Americana music" as he called it) only because it was a way to get on stage in the late 1950's. Thus, the fans who famously accused him of opportunism at the Newport Folk Festival of 1963, when he scandalized the crowd by coming on stage with electric guitars, had it backward; if he was being opportunistic, it was in turning to folk, not in returning to rock.

But the whole controversy was beside the point, and it was John Hammond who had things right. In any case, there was a perfectly good reason for Dylan's turn to folk music: he liked it. He had, and has retained, an abiding admiration for Woody Guthrie, who had combined folk music and politics, lending his voice to labor unions and a variety of radical causes. (Guthrie was a Communist, though not a member of the party.)

The "folk-rock" that emerged from Dylan's twin passions had an impact on American music comparable to that wrought by the late Ray Charles, who a few years earlier combined gospel and blues to create the sound that would be called soul music, in the process offending audiences no less than Dylan would. The latter's innovations can be traced in the albums he turned out in the intensely creative years between 1961 and 1965. Two "folk" albums (*Bob Dylan* and *The Times They Are a-Changin'*) moved within the ambit of the civil-rights movement at its high-water mark, and three "folk-rock" records put him over the top as a star: *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, and *Blonde on Blonde*.

Critics debate whether Dylan's creative juices ran dry after *Blonde on Blonde*. In 1966, he was injured in a motorcycle accident and spent two years convalescing; when he returned to touring and writing, his fans de-

tected a deep change. But this was again off-point. After some experimenting with country music in the late 1960's and early 1970's (as in *Nashville Skyline*), he made a brilliantly original roots-of-rock album in 1989, *Oh Mercy*, the result of a collaboration with the producer and arranger Daniel Lanois, himself one of the most creative forces in American music. Beyond that date *Chronicles* does not take us, but it is safe to say that in later years as in earlier ones, there have been albums of uneven quality, more and less productive collaborations, loyal and disappointed fans. As a songwriter, he has remained himself while forever innovating—again, much like Ray Charles.

DYLAN IS usually credited with giving rock 'n' roll a second, stronger wind after its initial burst of adolescent energy had run out. At this remove, one can question whether the lyrics he wrote were in fact as strong as his admirers believed. It was no doubt enchanting to hear sentiments more interesting than the ooh-baby-ooh of early rock, and in Dylan's hands, lines like "The motorcycle black Madonna/Two-wheeled gypsy queen . . ." (from "Gates of Eden," 1965), accompanied by electrified guitar and organ, could be quite striking; nevertheless, they do not hold up very well either on the page or in repeated hearings. Too often the tropes are facile or, worse, absurd, the rhymes forced, the allusions pretentious or downright embarrassing.

Oddly enough, the best elements of his work are the recurring themes, banal as they sound when listed: laments against a cold world or against a lover's cold heart, songs of nostalgia and melancholy. In the 60's, when he won his reputation, whining and alienation were the rage, and his particular entries in the woe-is-me sweepstakes of that complaining generation were exemplary. Still, he was strongest when he let go, moving from longing and self-pity into frank desire, carnal or spiritual. Singing of faith ("Gotta Serve Some-

body," 1979), or of hope ("Knocking on Heaven's Door," 1973), or of social injustice ("Chimes of Freedom," 1964), he could be as haunting as when he sang of love fulfilled ("Lay Lady Lay," 1969) or (in too many songs to count) love disappointed.

In *Chronicles*, the well-known sardonic voice is to be found alongside the petulant voice of the jilted or jilting romantic; but so is a softer, kinder voice that takes people as they are and worries that they have been misunderstood or mistreated. That, too, was there from the beginning. In his running commentary on American society, Dylan was political without being ideological. The "system" that would soon be assaulted wholesale by 60's and 70's radicals was not what *he* seemed to have in mind when he sang about injustice, and though his songs were well-liked in "the movement," he is quite right to remind readers of this memoir that he himself never served, or wanted to serve, as anyone's spokesman:

[A]ll the cultural mumbo jumbo [was] imprisoning my soul—nau-seating me—civil rights and political leaders being gunned down, the mounting of the barricades, the government crackdowns, the student radicals and demonstrators versus the cops and the unions . . . the lying, noisy voices, the free love, the anti-money system movement—the whole shebang. . . . I was a family man now, didn't want to be in that group portrait.

If he did not like people who claimed to have God on their side, he also saw no point in accusing anyone, let alone a whole nation, of running with the devil.

DYLAN STILL sings, as he did many years ago in his "Song to Woody," of "a funny ol' world that's a-comin' along/Seems sick an' it's hungry, it's tired an' it's torn,/It looks like it's a-dyin' an' it's hardly been born." He seeks answers in religion, documents the ones he finds, moves on

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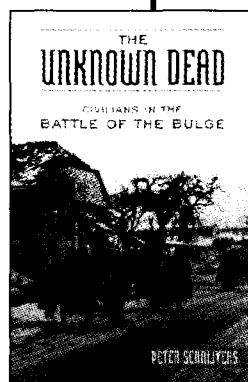
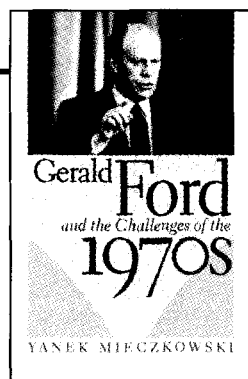
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when they fall short. In the end, his canon is drawn from the canon of American history, which is why *Chronicles* refers not only to such powerful musical influences as Guthrie and Robert Johnson but to the likes of Robert E. Lee, Thaddeus Stevens, Theodore Roosevelt, and Joe Hill, among others.

The times, as he famously stated, were a-changin'. But though, at the time he announced this, he did so with a certain air of arrogance, he reveals himself here to have been rather less confident of what it all meant. That he already sensed this uncertainty more than four decades ago is no doubt what lay behind his insistence in 1961 that he sang no protest songs, recommended no program, spoke for no party. That may be the key to what enabled him to revitalize American folk music, invent folk-rock, and transform the face, and the sound, of rock 'n' roll.

Stars and Gripes

Anti-Americanism

edited by Andrew Ross and Kristin Ross

New York University. 344 pp. \$49.95

Understanding Anti-Americanism: Its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad

edited by Paul Hollander

Ivan R. Dee. 372 pp. \$28.95

Reviewed by
Arch Puddington

THE "ONLY COMPARISON" to the way the United States is behaving on the world stage these days, the British playwright Harold

ARCH PUDDINGTON is the author of *Lane Kirkland: Champion of American Labor*, reviewed in the April COMMENTARY by Seth Lipsky.

Pinter said recently, is the Third Reich: "Nazi Germany wanted total domination of Europe and they nearly did [accomplish that]. The U.S. wants total domination of the world and is about to consolidate that." According to Norman Mailer, the "specter of fascism" has been hanging over America, a specter that could become reality "if we are struck by economic miseries."

Such comparisons have been all too easy to find lately. Indeed, in the years since the attacks of September 11, and particularly in the aftermath of the American response, expressions of hatred and contempt for the United States in general, and for its leaders and policies in particular, have become a staple not only of imams and rabble-rousers in the Muslim world but of Western cultural elites, both at home and abroad.

Nor is the global upsurge in anti-Americanism confined to opinion-makers and political or religious figures alone. A series of post-9/11 surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center reveal large majorities in France, Germany, and other major European countries harboring serious suspicions about America's motives in prosecuting the war on terrorism. (Among Muslims, Pew found overwhelming majorities opposing U.S. policies, along with substantial support for the terrorists themselves.) Books peddling wild conspiracy theories in which American officials are said to have organized the attacks of 9/11 have become European best-sellers.

What lies at the core of such attitudes? Are they a reaction to American military conduct and/or to our policies in the Middle East, or is there a more fundamental cause? These questions, and other closely related ones, are addressed in two recent collections. *Anti-Americanism*, edited by Andrew Ross and Kristin Ross (no relation), consists of contributions from seventeen professors, primarily from the faculty of New York University and all hailing from the Left. *Understand-*

ing Anti-Americanism, edited by Paul Hollander, a long-time student of the subject, comprises essays by a variety of experts from the center and Right. Although the books approach the subject from widely divergent ideological perspectives, they agree on a number of points.

ONE OF these is the crucial importance of economic globalization to the phenomenon under discussion. As cross-border trade and technological innovation have spread throughout the world, traditional norms have been overturned at an ever more rapid pace. In the third world, an agricultural transformation has spurred mass migration from the countryside to the cities, with wrenching political effect. In wealthy countries like France and Germany, the pain of globalization is felt in the form of pressure for a longer work week and fewer unemployment benefits. In both cases, the United States and "Americanization"—the putative engines of globalization—are held to blame.

The contributors to the Ross volume are themselves sympathetic to the anti-globalist movement. They see it as continuous with resistance to American imperialism and to the encroachments of multinational corporations—holdover rallying points for the cold-war Left—and their analysis of the phenomenon is peppered with neo-Marxian buzzwords.

More incisively and more convincingly, the contributors to Paul Hollander's *Understanding Anti-Americanism* tend to view the anti-globalist movement itself, as well as its anti-American cousin, as but the latest iterations of the Left's never-ending attack on capitalism. During the cold war, a number of the essayists point out, the radical Left had a dual agenda: deterring American power, and promoting whichever fashionable variant of socialism seemed to offer an alternative to market-oriented democracy. But in

the wake of the Soviet empire's demise, and with the socialist option utterly discredited, these frustrated energies coalesced in an ever more intense hatred of the global power most responsible for capitalism's triumph. With the end of Communism, James Ceaser writes here, anti-Americanism became the only ideology with a truly global reach.

This is especially the case in Europe, where the disappearance of the threat posed by the USSR seems to have released anti-U.S. hostilities long held in check. During the Reagan era, to be sure, many Europeans had permitted themselves to characterize the American President in language strikingly similar to that applied to George W. Bush today: "gunslinger chauvinist," "cowboy patriot," and so forth. But many others, recognizing the security threat posed by the Soviet Union, were appreciative of the American contribution to the common defense. After the Soviet collapse, the terms of the equation shifted. American economic and military strength, once regarded, however grudgingly, as an indisputable virtue, came to be seen as a vice and a threat. Even senior European statesmen, as authors in both volumes point out, began to employ scare phrases like "hyper-power" in referring to the United States, while others used still more hostile terms.

THE CASE of Arab and Muslim anti-Americanism is a somewhat separate phenomenon. In the Ross volume, the sole entry supposedly devoted to the subject consists of an interview with Rashid Khalidi, the holder of the Edward Said chair at Columbia University, but he hardly delves beneath the surface of the issue. The Hollander volume is once again greatly superior. In a co-authored essay, Patrick Clawson and Barry Rubin argue that in the Middle East, anti-Americanism is the sole surviving element of a broader ideology that has outlived its time and place.

In setting out their theme, Claw-

son and Rubin reject the conventional view, according to which the seething hatred of the United States we see in the Arab world is driven overwhelmingly by our alliance with Israel or our intervention in Iraq, or by the rise of conservative Islam. Instead, they too return to the early years of the cold war, when radical and largely secular nationalists in the Nasser mold assumed power in the region. Embracing ideas rooted in both fascism and Communism, and forming alliances with the USSR, this new generation of Arab leaders had a strong incentive to demonize the United States.

With the passage of time, the power of that incentive only intensified. Authoritarian statism brought with it an era of corruption, bureaucratization, and stasis, and hatred of the United States became an increasingly useful prop for unsteady regimes in need of diverting popu-

lar discontent. Step by step, this hatred became one of the core elements of an unchallengeable orthodoxy; as such, it survived even the fall of the USSR, becoming, along with anti-Semitism and loathing for Israel, an all-purpose explanation for omnipresent poverty and economic backwardness.

AS FOR home-grown anti-Americanism, it, too, though sharing characteristics with the European variety, is a somewhat distinct phenomenon. Contributors to the Hollander volume seem to concur that while domestic anti-Americanism remains a force on the radical Left, and of course in the universities, overall it exhibits far less élan than was the case during the Vietnam war. This trend clearly disappoints several of the essayists in the Ross volume, who strive to show that the American domestic order is sufficiently

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unjust to warrant a much angrier and more deeply seated response.

Interestingly, however, neither collection dwells on the issue of race (apart from one wholly unpersuasive attempt in *Anti-Americanism* to portray the U.S. as rife with anti-Asian prejudice). This is itself indicative: after all, the image of the United States as a deeply racist society was central to the sweeping indictments leveled against it in the recent past. The disappearance of that image points us to one of the essential characteristics of anti-Americanism, wherever it may be found: for those who hate the United States, the criteria are less important than the hatred.

Indeed, the criteria are infinitely flexible and constantly subject to change. If American race relations improve—as they have done, dramatically, over the course of the last decades—faults that are allegedly no less ineradicable will be found elsewhere; meanwhile, credit will never be given where credit is due.

In the end, what both of these books demonstrate, one of them inadvertently, is that anti-Americanism is not to be equated with dissent from American policies, no matter how passionately that dissent may be expressed. As Paul Hollander's valuable collection makes clear, and as the Ross volume confirms by the sometimes ludicrous lengths to which its contributors go in order to justify America's most relentless critics, hatred of America bears, rather, many of the features of a faith, and is not amenable to the usual standards of rational discourse. Those who resent America for what it is—not for what it does—are unlikely to undergo a change of heart no matter what changes take place either in the United States or in the wider world.

Unfit to Print?

Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper

by Laurel Leff

Cambridge. 426 pp. \$29.00

Reviewed by
Daniel Johnson

THIS BOOK tells the story of how the most powerful newspaper in the world failed to inform its readers that the most terrible crime in history was taking place in occupied Europe. The *New York Times* did not ignore the Nazi persecution of the Jews. In fact, the paper ran hundreds of stories about it during the twelve years of the Third Reich, a handful of them on the front page. Its failure was to make no distinction between random persecution and genocide.

Laurel Leff, a former reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* who now teaches journalism at Northeastern University in Boston, demonstrates that the correspondents, the editors, and, especially, the publisher of the *Times* had the information they needed in order to grasp what was going on. Yet they quite cold-bloodedly downplayed the scale and significance of the unfolding tragedy: not inadvertently, but as a matter of policy. For the *Times*, the Holocaust was not a story.

Why not? As Leff writes, to have drawn attention to the genocidal aims and methods of Nazi anti-Semitism, or to focus on the fate of individual victims, would have imposed a duty upon the *Times* to mobilize public opinion. The newspaper would have been obliged, through its news columns and editorial pages, to raise the national

consciousness and thereby put pressure on the U.S. government to save as many Jewish lives as possible. That, however, was precisely what Arthur Sulzberger, the publisher, and his senior staff were determined not to do. Instead, all reports of deportations, massacres, and death camps were fitted into a framework that required no action to be taken beyond the overriding aim of winning the war.

Thus, according to the paradigm that dominated the mentality of *Times* executives, the Jews were only one of many targets of Nazi barbarity. The notion that, as a people, they could have been singled out for a global "Final Solution" was, despite the overwhelming evidence, rejected. Even when the Nazis manifestly treated the Jews as a people or a race, Sulzberger denied that they were one. Indeed, he seems to have thought that taking at face value the Nazis' intentions toward the Jews—as openly advertised in speeches, books, and propaganda—would somehow lower the *Times* to their level.

According to Leff, Sulzberger was no less adamantly delusional on the subject of Zionism. Although mortal peril had rendered the creation of a Jewish state imperative, the *Times* editorialized even against the formation of a Zionist army unit under British command, on the grounds that it would create dual loyalties in Allied countries. Sulzberger was also receptive to the private denunciations of Zionists by his Middle East correspondent, Alexander C. Sedgwick, who found the Zionist creed to be "not unlike that of the Nazis."

LEFF'S EXCELLENT book is more than an indictment of the *Times*'s willful myopia; it also investigates how and why it came about. Having been given considerable access to internal correspondence and personal files—for which the newspaper is surely to be commended—she is able to build up a picture of how

DANIEL JOHNSON, who has served on the editorial pages of the *London Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, is now a columnist for the *New York Sun*. His review of *The Dictators* by Richard Overy appeared in the October 2004 COMMENTARY.

the *Times* functioned. Her research into the minutiae of specific stories shows that differences in personality—for instance, whether a particular bureau chief was sympathetic to the Nazis or Vichy France—could make a difference in the handling of the news. But even when such personal factors are taken into account, in the end it was the prevailing ethos that determined the inattention to the Jews' plight. Sulzberger's editors did not need to be told explicitly that (as the Office of War Information had advised the press) "the Semitic question should be avoided."

This tacit policy took many forms. At first, as Leff details, eyewitness accounts were treated with skepticism if they came from Jewish sources. Reports of Nazi atrocities against Jews were routinely given less prominence than those involving Christians or Czechs or, indeed, virtually any other category of victim. Protests on behalf of Jews, even by non-Jewish organizations, were played down, and acts of resistance by Jews went all but unnoticed.

Even the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943, which forced the Germans to divert forces from the Russian front for many weeks, made it onto the front page only once. By the time the dimensions of the Jewish calamity—"about half the estimated 4,000,000 Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe had been slain in an 'extermination' campaign"—were officially confirmed by the State Department in November 1942, the reaction of the *Times* was to bury the news on page ten, beneath two other related stories. And when the paper finally reported from the liberated death camps themselves, the fact that the vast majority of victims had been Jews was glossed over.

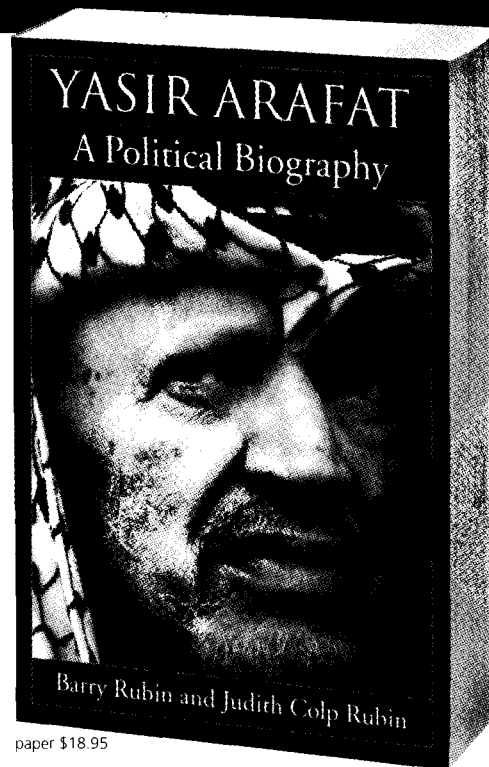
THE FACTS set out by Leff are indisputable; the question of motive is more complex and speculative. Why did Sulzberger, a prominent member of the New York liberal

Jewish community, turn a blind eye to an evil that threatened Jews everywhere? He had been ready to go to trouble and expense to help his own relatives in Germany to escape, but he was unwilling to give refugee writers any opportunity to work for the *Times*, let alone to use the paper as a platform to publicize their ordeals.

Apart from the influence he

wielded through the news and opinion columns of the *Times*, Sulzberger also had access to the highest levels of government, at home and abroad. Yet he seems to have been pathologically averse to anything that might have been seen as special pleading for the Jews. True, there were anti-Semites in the U.S., too, who might blame Jews for dragging their fellow Americans into an un-

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wanted war. After Pearl Harbor, however, this rationale for caution had lost whatever force it once had.

In Leff's plausible judgment, the underlying reason for Sulzberger's stubborn refusal to alter his attitude to the Jewish predicament, even after the end of the war, was an unspoken fear of putting at risk a century of successful Jewish assimilation in American society. Above all, he was wary of any new influx of European Jews into the United States. Assimilation, for Sulzberger, was a prize for which he was prepared to let other Jews make any sacrifice.

At the time, some Americans, and not only Jews, denounced the *Times* and its publisher for moral cowardice. Even Henry Morgenthau, Roosevelt's Treasury Secretary and Sulzberger's closest ally in the administration, was irritated by the *Times*'s failure to support his efforts on behalf of Jewish refugees. But the government, too, had been presenting the fate of the Jews as a peripheral matter. Just as with attitudes toward Stalin, the mind-set of the Office of War Information when it came to the Jews dovetailed neatly with that of the *Times*. In its anxiety to avoid accusations of philo-Semitic bias, the *Times* thus will-

ingly allowed itself to become an instrument of *raison d'état*.

In doing so, it committed multiple acts of betrayal. Turning down Albert Einstein himself, who had pleaded with him to assist the famous Berlin theater critic Alfred Kerr, Sulzberger claimed that he had to remain "dissociated from any movement which springs from the oppression of the Jews in Germany. Only in this way can the unprejudiced and unbiased position of the *Times* be understood." In other words, as between oppressors and oppressed, the great organ of American liberalism would remain fastidiously neutral.

The *Times* betrayed the Jews of Europe by abandoning them. It betrayed its American readers by misleading them. And it betrayed its own exalted self-image by failing utterly to discharge its public responsibility in reporting the Final Solution.

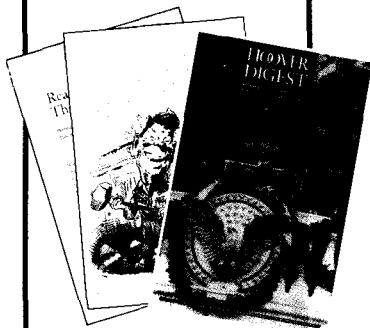
LAUREL LEFF's dispassionate and impeccably fair account builds on Deborah Lipstadt's more general survey of the American press in those years, *Beyond Belief* (1985). As a portrait of the journalistic culture of the *Times* in wartime, it is unlike-

ly to be superseded. Anybody who has worked in or for a newspaper will recognize the cast of characters, from the night editors who doggedly refused to see anything new in the tales of unspeakable Jewish suffering to the foreign correspondents in the *Times*'s European and Middle Eastern bureaus: the careerist and the collaborator, the desperado and the dandy, the publisher's nephew. Nothing changes as rapidly as the news; nothing changes as slowly as newspapers.

Is it unfair today to castigate the *Times* for its coverage of events, however traumatic, that occurred six decades ago? Not only is it fair, the exercise is also highly relevant to the present situation. For ours is a moment when anti-Semitism has returned with a vengeance, primarily focused now on Israel and its American ally. Now, as then, the *Times* sets the tone for much of the rest of the American press and other media. Yet even now, when the editors of the *Times* are acutely aware of the paper's failures in World War II, they have responded to a sustained campaign of incitement and indiscriminate mass murder against Jews with, at best, neutrality. This book helps to explain why.

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In the current debate on Social Security reform, President Bush has refused to rule out a tax increase on those who earn more than \$90,000 a year. That's the current maximum earned income on which Americans pay Social Security (FICA) taxes. Republican senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina has suggested making all earned income up to \$200,000 taxable. Such a tax is a bad idea. There is not only a strong economic case against it but also a strong moral one.

First, the economics. Increasing the amount of taxed income would massively raise marginal tax rates for many of the most productive people. The marginal tax rate on those whose income is between \$90,000 and \$200,000 would increase by 6.2 percentage points for employees and by a whopping 12.4 percentage points for the self-employed. (Part of the 6.2 points paid by the employer would be borne by the employee, but that's a longer story.) Most people with earned income between \$90,000 and \$200,000 face a marginal tax rate of 31 to 40.5 percent. They are in a 25 to 33 percent federal income tax bracket. Their state tax bracket, adjusted for the deductibility of state taxes on their federal tax form, is about 4.5 to 6 percent. They also pay a 1.45 percent Medicare tax (2.9 percent for the self-employed) on all earnings. Thus **raising the cap would increase taxes on those affected by up to one fifth of their current marginal tax rate.**

A salaried worker making \$200,000 a year would pay \$6,820 more in taxes every year,

whereas a self-employed worker would pay \$13,640 more. This would be the biggest tax increase on high-income people since President Clinton's and, for many people, would be a bigger tax increase than Clinton's. A rise in marginal tax rates would discourage work. The person previously in the 40.5 percent bracket would keep only 53.3 cents of an additional dollar earned, down from 59.5 cents before the tax increase. People would also find ways of being paid other than by taxable income, such as by receiving a company car.

Second, the morality. **A tax increase on people who already get a lousy deal from Social Security is wrong.** Presumably, benefits for higher-income taxpayers would not rise in line with taxes. Otherwise, why raise the tax in the first place? The purpose of the tax is to generate more revenue to solve the long-term funding problem, which would not occur if the government raised Social Security benefits dollar for dollar. Furthermore, even if Bush planned to raise benefits, that's little comfort. Many people are happy to save their own money for retirement. Currently, a few million Americans can look forward every year to reaching the existing threshold (\$90,000 in 2005) and knowing that the feds will keep their FICA hands off any additional income. We should be free to save that money or spend it as we wish. What a tragedy it would be if a president who believes in the "ownership society" ended up further violating citizens' rights to their own income.

—David R. Henderson

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